

**CLASSIC &
CONTEMPORARY
NUDE
PHOTOGRAPHY**

DAVID CHAMBERLAIN





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A PERSONAL VIEW



BLANDFORD



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*For Angela Rebecca Fernandez
and our son, Jay*

PREFACE

Art is a state of mind, it is not the medium which is used to create the work. Surely, this in itself is enough to resolve the question of whether photography be considered as 'art'? It can when it is the medium chosen by the artist to express his art.

No medium should in itself be considered art. A painter's brushes, palette and canvas are not art. Neither are the sculptor's hammers, chisels and unworked slab of stone. These materials require the application of the artist's mind, through the artist's hands, before art can be created. So it is with photography. But while millions may be able to take a photograph, few can create pictures. This is an art which cannot be learned. If someone has this talent it may be developed. That is all.

David Chamberlain

INTRODUCTION

For me, the naked human body is *the* most fascinating, exhilarating and rewarding of all photographic subjects, yet at the same time it is an area with which I am often unhappy to be involved. For me, as for other photographers, it is a true love/hate relationship.

Photographing the nude, particularly the female nude, holds a very great challenge. And success brings a great deal of excitement and personal satisfaction. For although we are all individual in many ways and physically different from each other, we do in fact have the same basic features and mechanical construction. It is in constantly trying to find new approaches to a very familiar and to some rather limited subject that I find my photographic gratification. This, for me, is further enhanced by the fact that I now choose to work with only one model – Angela Rebecca Fernandez. Working together with a common interest has produced a considerable amount of extra

pleasure and satisfaction for each of us, and I still find myself amazed to discover that the more pictures we produce, the more potential we find for others. This is not uncommon in photography. Glamour photography may, in general, involve professional models, but nude photography mainly involves people close to the photographer, which often shows in the quality of the work.

Sadly, a conflict occurs in my feelings towards nude photography which creates the darker side of my relationship with the subject. This conflict, about which I feel very strongly, is forced upon me. Put simply, it concerns the ethics of nude photography and the subsequent sale of the images created. The fact is that the current views on the subject of nude photography held by many people have become confused in recent years. This can be attributed mainly to our century's way of life and the type of society we have created. But most of all, I am sure that the negative

attitude held towards the nude as a photograph by a growing number of people can be attributed to the so-called glamour images published by so many of our newspapers and magazines. Photographic magazines have, in the recent past, had a great deal to answer for in this respect. Many invariably have a glamour shot on the front cover of almost every issue, and most use glamour to illustrate almost every point or technique of photography. Because of the sameness of lighting and predictability of pose most photographs published in this anodyne style have little or nothing to commend them in a technical or aesthetic sense. Indeed, it seems that the most important criteria by which many editors assess pictures for publication are the size of a girl's breasts and the width of an obviously synthetic smile.

To make matters worse, many members of the public who do object to the misuse or overuse of such glamour photographs sometimes go somewhat 'over the top' in their condemnation and want any photograph with an element of nudity banned.

This has been experienced strongly within the photographic press with the recent advent of photographic magazines which now refuse to publish pictures of the nude, or which will only publish one portfolio per year. This is more serious than it might at first seem; after all, most keen amateur photographers rely heavily and rightly on the photographic press for guidance. Is it not reasonable to expect that editors and publishers have enough wisdom and experience to decide for themselves which pictures are attempting to reveal a truth, and which belong to the tabloids?

Also, movements such as women's liberation seem now to feel that a nude picture of any woman is sexist. Whilst I sympathise with their distrust of nude photography in many cases, particularly with regard to the artificial and to obviously insincere glamour photography, I genuinely believe that total condemnation of all pictures featuring a naked person is wrong. Common sense must prevail to show us the way. We must remember that the nude in itself is not obscene or alarming.

The nude has always been one of the strongest and so most popular subjects for artists. Surely this is quite

natural? After all, the subject is us. We may choose through photography to capture in the nude perhaps something unusual, or to capture the naked in an unnatural or not-obvious manner, but this too is quite normal. It is our intellect, the way that our minds work, indeed the way we choose to see things and the situations we choose to create that define us as a species and individually: this is part of our make-up as human beings. Within reason, within what culture currently defines as normal, this also cannot be wrong.

Problems within the area of the photographic world are created because there is a very fine and always moving dividing line between that which we consider acceptable, and that which is viewed as offensive. What was perfectly acceptable, even charming, to the Victorians, especially within areas concerning the use as models of naked children, is totally unacceptable one hundred years later. The dividing line may be positioned at different levels in each person, as it is within different times, and so we often, as individuals, have different opinions of what is or is not offensive.

Personally, I have this dividing line very clearly drawn in my mind and I am never tempted to stray over it. It has so far proved to be an adequate division between what is and is not acceptable, and has proved beneficial whenever my work is shown in public. As yet I have not received a complaint or objection to any of my nude photographs. And indeed, I have been pleased to note that it is often women within the audience at my lectures who seem to show the greatest interest in my pictures.

There is and there has to be a sexual element in nude photography; if not in the eye of the person capturing the photograph, then in the eye of the person viewing that photograph. Although I did not recognise this in my earliest work, much of which was quite abstract, I see it now. It is almost always evident in nude work to some degree. And how should it not be? True, I wasn't aware of it in my early work because I wasn't looking for it, but others noticed a sexual element within my pictures. I believed – as do many photographers – that I was merely exploiting form and graphic shapes. It was only through other people's eyes that I began to notice the sexual element within



An artist's study c. 1857 from O.G. Rejlander (1813–1875). It was Rejlander's *The Two Ways of Life*, published in this year, which brought him lasting fame. An assemblage made up of over 30 negatives, it relied heavily on traditions in classical art and showed the influence of Rejlander's early years studying painting in Rome.

what were abstract photographs. Now that I am aware of this side to nude work, it would seem pretentious to state that capturing the nude is all about shape and form. It *is* about these aspects, but more often than not it has an element of sexuality involved – not always obvious but present nevertheless.

It would, I believe, be foolish to think otherwise. We are, like most other species of animal, physically aware: we are bound to be. It is after all this awareness which preserves and propagates our kind. It is the very drive behind our existence, so why should we ignore it, particularly in nude photography?

Since we are dealing with a very important subject, I believe we must treat it honourably. But this is not to suggest that photography of the naked figure has to be straight-laced and boring. Indeed, most photographers find it fun and almost always either challenging or enjoyable. Life itself isn't always totally serious and nude photography need not be either: humour can play an essential part in this subject.

My approach to the subject is usually based on my personal and innermost feelings. I allow these feelings to guide me and try not to allow any compromise to creep into my pictures. Although not all serious photographs are easy to understand, there is usually a sincere reason beneath the surface of each one.

Creativity is a much maligned and overused word nowadays. It does, however, exist as a driving force behind much 'good' photography. An imaginative attitude and approach is required if the best is to be made of the subject. You are by now no doubt aware of my views on glamour photography. I don't like it and believe that it trivialises an important subject. Photographers should be encouraged to use their imagination in tackling what could otherwise be a limited subject. It is, however, these very limitations which makes photographing the nude so interesting, challenging and rewarding.

Imagination is the key to developing any subject and, with experience, the subject will in return help to develop the imagination: a progressive effect which ultimately improves one's own ability to see 'the' moment within any shoot. Creativity or imagination, combined with a carefully developed technical ability, can produce the envisaged results and provide good

artistic photographs. This, in turn, begs another question: Can any photograph ever be considered as art in the true sense of the word? I believe it can.

I consider the word *art* to be another much misused and misunderstood term. It is a misunderstanding which causes photographers great concern and considerable anger. Man seems to have a strange need to put things into special slots, under specific labels or headings. Unfortunately, with regard to photography, we do not yet seem to have decided into which slot it should fit.

There is a widely-held view that because of the mechanics of the camera and the simplicity of the modern photographic process anyone can take a photograph, even a child. – True. Does it follow therefore that photography is simple and as such cannot be considered art? After all, paintings and sculpture take time and skill to execute; is this not an important criterion, many argue? Yet some paintings, it can be countered, apparently require very little skill or time to complete. So what makes art? It is a question close to the heart of nude photography. We have witnessed piles of bricks, stacked car tyres and other ephemeral junk carefully or sometimes not so carefully arranged and then labelled art. Some of this has huge price tags placed upon it and art critics alternatively praise or decry it, in either case further inflating its claim to fame – and financial value.

Sometimes, particularly when I listen to critics discussing another modern masterpiece or hear of a ridiculously high price paid for an ordinary, though good piece of art, I am convinced that the whole 'art world' and those involved in it are practitioners of a sick joke. Art, in the true sense of the word, is rapidly becoming muddled and lost in the world of high finance and pretentious talk.

Surely at a simple level we cannot be that naive in believing that art is to do with a state of mind or a way of seeing – an appreciation of something either beautiful or exacting, executed with skill and intellect. Something that is created for sheer pleasure and personal satisfaction – not for profit or gain. I believe that all art, be it for oneself or commissioned, is created primarily within the demands set by the artist.

Art is not to be confused with the particular med-

ium used to create the work. Paint, brushes and canvas, great slabs of stone are not works of art before the artist has applied his mind and manual abilities to them. They only become important after the work is complete. A skilled stonemason may have the ability to cut stone accurately, and almost anyone is capable of learning how to apply oil paint to canvas, but only the artist can create a work of original beauty from these materials.

Photography, particularly in the medium of monochrome, has many flexible stages, each of which is variable and under the direct control of a photographer. Anyone can produce a photograph – all it takes is a polaroid – but only a few can produce originality through photography, drawing images from the mind. If we *must* categorise things and place them into specific slots, surely there must be a slot for serious and demanding photography – in the right hands it can be an art form in the true meaning of the word.

Unfortunately many people involved in the publication of books or magazines involving photography and those acting as curators of collections of photographs, elevate some not very good work to an artificially high level. This is true of all photography and not only nude studies.

Thinking back to my own beginning with photography, I certainly recall starting purely for pleasure. The nude has been of artistic interest to me since the age of ten when I began to draw and paint female nudes. At this tender age it was difficult to persuade older models that I was serious about art, so it was necessary to use the paperback books to be found in my father's room, lurking in plain brown envelopes, as a basis from which to work. I was not fooled by the fact that in those days the nudes in these books had plain white spaces where pubic hair grows. Even at ten years old I did appreciate this much! Anyway, I made my own drawings from these photographs, not by copying directly but by using them as reference for shape, form and lighting. I coloured in some of these drawings, while others would be drawn in charcoal or soft pencil. I spent probably at least two hours a day in this way, and enjoyed the work and the end results immensely.

I carried on drawing intensely until the age of 16 when a head injury sustained in a road accident impaired my ability to use a pencil. I missed drawing so much that I gladly took up photography when a friend gave me a camera. Initially I was not that good, although I learned the basics of exposure and developed my own black and white films and prints. At that time I was still interested in the nude as a subject and yet did not have the confidence to approach suitable models. Least of all had I the confidence in my own photographic ability to approach a model agency, if indeed such agencies existed in those days. This is a major problem for many photographers – no model, no photograph.

Eventually, I turned my photographic interest towards other subjects, with little real success, although luckily enough others did seem to like the pictures I was producing at that time. Yet still the subject of the nude haunted and eluded me. Only very occasionally did I find a girl who was willing to model naked, but these short ventures never seemed to work well. The pictures produced in this way were ordinary or stilted in the extreme and I produced nothing with which I was truly satisfied. Photography became tiresome and, after a while a somewhat on/off affair with probably more time off than on.

Perhaps if I had been more interested in the technical demands of photography the hobby would not have been so intermittent. I have never found the physical job of setting up a camera to be of any interest whatsoever. Always it has been the end result which I enjoy – the print. It is still the same now.

It wasn't until 1981, when I was 32, that I concentrated on photography on a permanent basis. This came about when I met my future wife Angela Fernandez.

Angela came to me at the age of 16 at her mother's direction, as a photographic model. We soon fell in love and realised that we shared an interest in nude photography. We both enjoy working on ideas for pictures and gain a great amount of personal satisfaction from the finished prints. It is this key relationship between photographer and model which runs through much of what I regard as the best in nude photography. Such a relationship certainly enabled

me to develop more imaginative photographic ideas until I reached the stage where I produce many pictures with which I am totally satisfied. This becomes increasingly easier to achieve as our relationship lengthens and develops. Angela now understands how my photographic mind works, appreciates the type of picture I want to produce, contributes ideas herself and works with me towards achieving the end result.

In addition, I am discovering that the potential for new pictures, in what many regard as a limited area, seems to widen all the time. The one regret I have, if any, is the demands made by taking up photography and writing about it as a career. On the one hand I find that I am interested in producing pictures for their own sake. I have never been particularly bothered what others may think of my work – in fact I don't really care at all, which is a strength and a weakness. But working professionally I find that I need to produce pictures which are not for me, which can be a problem.

And finally, let me explain my approach to this book. About 10% of it is concerned with technique,

90% with thought and intuition. It has therefore veered away from the original conception, which stressed the 'how to do it' approach following in the wake of my developing views on nude photography.

The most important lesson I have learnt is that there is always much more to learn! And that it should be learnt. No one can profess to be the expert on nude photography. I have not been doing it long enough and don't believe that life is long enough for anyone to achieve such status. All that I can hope is to pass on what knowledge and experience I have gained in this most challenging of all photographic subjects. I do believe that no one person can teach this subject fully; no one person can learn all that there is to know. All I can do is express a personal view on a personal subject, pass on what small amount of technical knowledge I have acquired, and hope that you can interpret this information in a way that suits you. Look at my photographs, ask how you would have set about each assignment, and compare it with my approach. Hopefully, this will reveal new imaginative possibilities. After that, it's over to you.

HISTORY OF NUDE PHOTOGRAPHY

Perhaps it's inevitable (though nonetheless very sad) that as a result of 'page 3' photographs in the tabloids, we are now experiencing an ever-growing pressure from a large number of people who apparently want nothing less than an end to photography of the naked figure. Of course, I understand how this attitude has arisen – through the misuse and overuse of stylised pictures of partly-clad large-breasted young women. The photographs are almost always taken with little imagination, poor taste and, in many cases, with an approach verging on the obscene. Fortunately, however, the nude as an artistic subject will almost certainly transcend this difficult period, as it has survived others.

The nude in art has been with us for a very long time, first appearing long before the advent of photography. The nude has been a key subject for artists from a period dating at least to classical Greece, and has remained an ever-popular subject with artists

throughout the world and throughout time, right up to the present. The nude was particularly popular as decoration with the Greeks and Romans, and it is partly from the decorated pottery of these periods that we derive our neo-classical style of the nude form. Certainly many post-Renaissance artists have taken their inspiration from the early classical styles and, after a period of abstraction, many still do today.

Photography is new in comparison with other art forms, and great excitement was caused within the art world by the invention of the first photographic process by which a permanent image was produced in 1839 by Louis Daguerre. Almost immediately, the new photographers used the nude as a subject for their photographs, with many nineteenth-century artists using photographs as source material for drawing and painting.

In these early days the photographic light-sensitive coatings were very slow and the camera lenses were of



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The artist and his model

relatively small aperture by today's standards, necessitating a long exposure time to record the image. Such long exposure, often lasting several minutes, demanded static photographic subjects. The early photographers of the nude were quick to copy the classical style, largely because nude models were then usually artist's models who already had experience of maintaining a static pose. Many early photographic nude studies relied on a statuesque style or were posed in a static seated or reclining position. Often, bowls of fruit or vases of flowers were positioned by the model, reminiscent of the style of contemporary artists. Photographers such as Oscar Rejlander were later to elevate this to a form of high art.

As light-sensitive emulsions gradually became more sensitive and the new lenses with their wider apertures became faster, photographers were able to experiment with setting new boundaries to nude photography. Photographs began to be more natural in many cases: in others, photographers experimented with dramatic lighting. Some even started to manipulate the photographic process itself in an attempt to produce outstanding results. The medium of photography gradually expanded as photographers everywhere began to seek new and fresh images and techniques. Recording what passed for reality ceased to be their main aim. A new breed of artist was born – the artist who works with photography instead of brush, palette and canvas.

Strangely, great exponents of the photographic nude have always been a little thin on the ground and indeed still are today. Certainly, there have been photographers who have photographed the nude consistently and managed to produce outstanding, even 'great' nude studies. But there has as yet been no photographer who has specialised in the nude to the exclusion of everything else, except perhaps in com-

mercial terms by those who surely can in no way be taken seriously. There certainly have been some memorable photographs of the nude taken by early photographers, but unfortunately the original negatives or prints of many of these pictures are now lost. Other photographs, such as those by White, Day, Steichen and Demachy, are largely confined to private collections and rarely see the light of day as often as they ought. However, the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain does have a collection of nude studies by the photographer O.G. Rejlander (among others) dating from about 1854. These are currently in negative form only but, as I write, contact prints are being produced for the RPS from these negatives, and may be in the collection by the time this book is in print.

In more recent years, the quantity of quality nude work has increased. Edward and Brett Weston have produced some outstanding nude studies, as has Irving Penn. André Kertész has produced some brilliant nude studies – his series of mirror distortions being particularly memorable.

Tastes in styles of nude photography are obviously personal and as viewers we are each influenced by our own feelings on the subject. Take time to look at the work of the major or best photographers of the nude and you will see many different, often apparently conflicting, styles. Each photographer seems to have his or her own approach. Paths often cross, however, and you will see certain pictures from each photographer which *do* have some obvious similarities. Photographers, like painters or sculptors, do not consciously copy each other's work but are certainly influenced in a variety of ways by what they see within the medium in which they work. The work of others may often provide the seed of an idea or perhaps the essence of a mood. It happens all the time and is a natural stimulus for creative or artistic development and growth.

The photographers who I would be proud to feel have most influenced me are all relatively recent or current. Bill Brandt, David Bailey and Jeanloup Sieff are perhaps the ones who have exercised the greatest influence. Sieff's nude work is perhaps the most traditional of these three, often deceptively simple and

The Artist and His Model, 1913, platinum print, by Richard Polak (1870–1957). The photographer filled a house he had purchased in Rotterdam with seventeenth-century furniture and used it for a series of photographs which reflected the Dutch school of art—one of the most obvious cases of photography attempting to become art by pretending to be painting.

very beautiful for this reason. Brandt and Bailey, I believe, are the true innovators, particularly Brandt.

Brandt seemed to take very little, if any, stimulus from other photographers or artists. Indeed he was perhaps the only photographer to be totally original in his vision and portrayal of the nude. I stand in awe of the man's intellect. The fact that he has been so copied and imitated now blunts the apparent originality of his work, but should not be allowed to obscure his impact.

Bailey, too, has great intellect, although I am sure he sometimes of necessity falls victim to his own commercialism. Amongst his nudes, however, are some works of art and he is to be much admired.

Another photographer whom I admire greatly for his outstanding intellect and originality is the American, Ralph Gibson. He obviously thinks about the subject through his work very deeply and explores it in new and often unusual ways. His simplified and highly graphic style examines the very fabric and structure of the nude form. It is difficult to describe much of this work as beautiful in the normal, limited sense but it is unquestionably thought-provoking and strangely satisfying.

Although over the years there have been many photographers who have used the nude form as a prime subject for their cameras, few have produced a large amount of consistently high-quality work on the subject. Several have produced two or three excellent studies but few have achieved more than this. By its very nature, the nude is a difficult and demanding subject – art history has shown this to be true – and very few can rise above the difficulty of working with a limited subject matter to produce real works of original art.

The classical style of nude might seem at first to be the easiest and most obvious route to take. After all, it has been commercially and aesthetically successful over many generations. However, an artist is always seeking to break new ground: with a subject such as the naked human form, this is now almost impossible without reaching for special effects or manipulating technique. Many have tried this route, usually with little success. Nevertheless, to stick exclusively with the traditional and classic style is to stagnate. The

current trends in nude photography often seem to follow the pattern set by tabloid journalism, aiming to shock. Unfortunately, this is rarely carried out with any particular belief in the value of shock. It is more often an attempt to get noticed, talked about or rewardingly hooked to the band-wagon of the contemporary vogue. Sadly, it actually seems to work.

Fortunately, time is a great leveller. In a few years such ephemeral work will cease to appear quite so immediate and viewers will begin to see it for that which it really was, defined by its own limitations. For this reason contemporary styles of nude photography and the photographers producing the work need to exercise great care. It is easy to appear dated, even easier to appear glib. At present we still retain a great freedom to portray the nude in any way we choose, but we have to beware of changing public opinion and respect the views of others. It is rewarding and necessary for photography to be able to capture the nude with imagination, be it in a realistic or stylised way. But the greater proportion of the general public and many artists do not wish to see the medium become a visual clinical examination of the human anatomy.

Perhaps the best contemporary photography being produced today is that which clearly blends traditional classic styles with modern ways of thinking and seeing. Look at the work of many of the better-known current photographers and this blending of style is often quite obviously present. With the potential for much better control of image and technique within the medium of photography, improved cameras, lenses and photographic materials all enable us to control and create the final image of our photograph to a far greater degree than ever before. Studio lighting, particularly electronic flash, further increases our potential for exploring the subject more fully. All these things – understanding of style, tradition and equipment – enable us to expand upon the classical style, adding or embellishing it with experiences and attitudes from our modern way of life. Alternatively, our own experiences or even knowledge of the past enables us to strengthen our own pictures with suggestions or symbolism of the way we now view things. The potential for contemporary and future

nude photography to build up on classic styles is surely limited only by our own abilities and imagination. We do not necessarily need to shock or offend.

The exact future for nude photography is obviously impossible to predict. Photography has now, in all probability, worked through its recent craze for special effects and techniques. It would seem, too, in many cases that the idea that if a picture is so complicated it cannot be understood then it must be good, is now perhaps beginning to pass. This attitude seemed to me to be reminiscent of the story 'The Emperor's

New Clothes', wherein the emperor of China is convinced by tricksters that he is wearing a new suit of clothes, invisible only to himself. In fact the emperor is naked but is afraid to admit this should he appear foolish. So it is with art and with life.

Many people suffer this fear: they are so often afraid to voice honest opinions against a common consensus through fear of making themselves look silly. Honesty is essential in something as tricky and fraught with pitfalls as asking someone to remove their clothes and then stand naked in front of a camera.

THE MEDIUM

It might seem somewhat odd to be grateful to have been involved in an accident. However, it is true. For if it were not for two accidents and the injuries sustained in them I would not be so lucky as to enjoy working as a photographer.

I have already mentioned the first accident; three years later I sustained leg, knee, hand and wrist injuries which forced me to give up my trade as a bricklayer. After several years of trying unsuccessfully to settle into other jobs, I decided to concentrate on photography and writing about it as a career. Although I may now have the luxury of regretting this in many ways, it has at least developed my interest and involvement with the medium, purely through the greatly increased work load.

This period of intense experience with the medium has taught me a great deal about myself and the limits of photography, as much as about the demanding medium itself.

Although over the years I have learnt thoroughly the techniques necessary to enable me to produce the sort of pictures I like – the nuts and bolts of photography – the one point which has been most firmly established in my mind is, that I absolutely love pictures but loathe the repetitive techniques of photography itself. And yet, only through this medium can I obtain full artistic satisfaction.

As a teenager I had learnt that drawing and painting enable you, relatively easily, to produce any desired picture. The shapes in the mind can be reproduced on canvas and later modified without degrading from the final image. But photography is not like this at all. You cannot re-arrange reality to suit your needs – to a large extent it is going to arrange you, your techniques and your imaginative approach. Basically, what you have before the camera is what you get, no more and no less.

These restraints or limitations can be the most

exciting and challenging aspects of photography. They are also amongst the reasons why I don't enjoy the mechanics, techniques and processes of photography. I am constantly struggling against them in an effort to achieve the desired result. Yet success, when it comes, brings great satisfaction and a sense of achievement. A sense of 'Look, I have won'.

More recently, it has become increasingly important to me that my pictures are obviously photographic. Although I do still occasionally combine simple drawing or painting with my photographic pictures, there usually must also be some obvious aspect of photography. For this reason, I prefer a somewhat grainy image, not too exaggerated but certainly noticeable. This re-affirms that the image was made through the medium of photography.

Obtaining as much control as possible over the final image is very important. Control over tonal rendering, highlights and shadows can only be exercised fully when working with monochrome materials. Colour film, even colour negative, does not offer the same potential for control. For this reason, almost all of my work is carried out using black and white film. I also insist on making my own prints.

Black and white is, I believe, the ultimate medium for the keen photographer of the nude. The scope for the creative mind is almost unlimited and more artistic freedom in the visual arts can only be gained by painting or sculpting. Monochrome permits the photographic artist to make the most of light and shadow. Form, shape and texture can be greatly enhanced in blacks, greys and whites. Alternatively, these same shades lend themselves superbly to the forming of stark, simple and graphic shapes, providing immense variety for almost any sort of picture composition.

I have rarely found colour pleasing for nude photography and seldom use it. Indeed, I have discovered very few colour photographs of nudes which are satisfying. Although this is a highly personal view there does seem to be more than a hint of agreement from other photographers. Look at the nude photographs of almost all the best-known exponents of this subject, and you will discover that most work almost exclusively with monochrome.

There are two main problems when using colour for photographing a nude subject. First, there is rarely much colour apart from skin tone. This means there is a temptation to introduce additional colour to 'liven up' the picture which invariably results in a garish image. If colour is to be used for this difficult subject, probably the best chance of success involves being very sparing with additional colour. Fairly subdued colours are almost always the safest bet. Yet if you do select dominant colours, make a strong feature of them.

The second and most serious problem associated with colour, as far as I am concerned, is the consequent loss of control. If working with colour reversal films for slides, there is the serious problem of high contrast. This tends to limit the style and scope of the work and I have really only been successful when the style of my work utilises the characteristics of the film type.

Colour negative film is marginally better, particularly when controlling the problems of high contrast. However, the degree of control which is available when printing black and white is absent with colour negative printing. Colour shifts can easily become a serious problem. In addition to all the problems already linked with colour and the nude figure, most colour prints tend to fade. This is particularly true when prints are displayed. Two or three weeks in direct bright sunlight can be enough to fade prints almost beyond recognition. Even in fairly subdued lighting, they will eventually fade. A further handicap is that colour prints cannot be treated by toning to preserve their fade-resistant qualities, unlike black and white printing papers.

Despite all these problems and personal dislikes, I do like to produce some of my nude studies in colour. However, the way in which I choose to do this has very little to do with any normal colour films or processes.

I start with a black and white print and then apply colour to this by chemical toning and hand tinting. This enables me to exercise almost complete control over the final colour rendering. Only rarely do I decide to colour an existing picture in this way. Most frequently, the idea for the picture is conceived as a toned and tinted end result. This approach enables me



to plan the final picture and work throughout towards that end.

My normal approach to such prints involves chemical bleaching and sepia toning. More often than not I will then gold tone the print, either selectively or sometimes the entire image. This 'warms' the gingerish sepia colour and can produce a range of colours through light pink to rich orange. Water colour or dyes are then used to add additional colour where required. Usually this colour is restricted to background and small detail, such as lips or eyes.

I prefer the more subtle shades of colour, avoiding harsh clashes. If I do use bright colours, these are usually sympathetic to the general colouring of the picture.

My toned and tinted black and white prints can never be considered 'colour prints', and in fact still seem to be almost monochromatic. Yet, the applied colour does move them into a slightly different sphere. Through my involvement in this style of colour work, I now find great difficulty in relating to colour in the normal sense. The 'straight' colour pictures which I take are very few, and are prompted only when I have a specific picture idea which demands such measures. My only other use for colour film is restricted to the copying of my toned and tinted monochromes.

I am not a great believer in experimenting with techniques for the sake of experimentation, for this rarely creates photographs of any value. It is best to use a special effect or technique only when a specific idea demands its use. My views on equipment are very similar. Although I have owned and used a great many cameras, I have recently fixed on the 35mm

single lens reflex (SLR) camera, because it is more convenient and versatile than any other.

Generally, I don't think it matters too much exactly what make or type of camera you use, but for specific projects certain cameras will prove highly advantageous. Conversely, the type of camera used can influence your work.

I have tried just about everything, including the 35mm rangefinder Leica, which has never really suited my own type of work. Although it is extremely well constructed, very reliable and quiet to use, the relative inaccuracy of the viewfinder, compared with an SLR is too much of a handicap. Particularly because of my copying requirements. Nor is the camera's quietness a vital consideration. The noise I make when I'm working, crashing and falling around in the extremely confined space of my darkroom office studio, is more than enough to drown out the loudest motordrive!

Medium format cameras have always been a great temptation and I have tried many – Bronicas in 6 × 6 cm and 6 × 4.5cm, Mamiyas in 6 × 4.5cm, 6 × 6cm and 6 × 7cm, Hasselblads in 500cm and 2000FCM guise, and the Pentax 6 × 7cm. My own preference is for the 6 × 7cm format. I don't like the 6 × 6cm, and can never make up my mind 'how' to compose a picture within this square!

The advantage of the medium format is in its potential for extra quality. However, it is now this very feature which has driven me away from the big negatives. I no longer like the super smooth, ultra fine-grain results which such large negatives provide. They look like an attempt to reproduce reality in the final print. An element of graininess never lets people forget that they are examining a photographic work, and that the graininess itself is one of the photographer's techniques.

The twin lens reflex medium format cameras, such as the Mamiyas, are great cameras – for wedding photographers. For me, however, with their problems of parallax, they are as unhelpful as the rangefinder. However, they do have at least one advantage over most other types of camera in that they tend to slow down one's work rate. This can help provide a little extra time to think about each shot.

The Vision (Orpheus) by Fred Holland Day (1864–1933). Born in Massachusetts, Day inherited wealth and devoted much of his life to becoming one of the most original and striking forces in photography. *The Vision* is one of a series of photographs illustrating the legend of Orpheus, and at the time its full-frontal nudity was considered shocking. The vast bulk of Day's negatives and prints were destroyed by fire in 1904. Thirteen years later Day took to his bed and remained there for the next seventeen years.

As with the 35mm format, I have always found the SLR camera the most useful and versatile. This is equally true of medium format. The supreme accuracy of viewing and focusing through the lens which takes the photograph is, I am convinced, unsurpassable. Most medium format SLR cameras are almost as versatile as their 35mm counterparts, with a wide range of interchangeable lenses available, and often, the additional facility of interchangeable viewfinder systems and film backs. However, the one problem which I have encountered with the versatility of such systems concerns the extreme wide-angle lenses. Discounting the full-frame fisheye lenses, which produce images with gross curvature of field – straight lines appear as curves when positioned anywhere off the centre of the lens axis – the wide-angle lenses are usually restricted to the equivalent of about a 25mm lens on the 35mm format. Although the Pentax 6 × 7 cm system goes a little wider with its 45mm lens, equivalent to about 22mm focal length on 35mm, this still is only just acceptable for my work using wide-angle lenses. Even for nude photography, I prefer a lens of between 18mm and 21mm focal length on the 35mm format.

The standard and short to middle telephoto range is very well catered for on both 35mm and medium formats, and has never presented me with any problem. However, a drawback which does concern me greatly, and one which has propelled my move away from medium format, is the extremely limited depth-of-field which is available at any given aperture in comparison with lenses of similar angle of view on the 35mm format. This is due to the fact that lenses have to be of longer focal length with medium format to cover the increased size of the negative, while providing a comparatively similar angle of view. For example, a standard lens for 35mm will be approximately 50mm focal length, but on 6 × 6cm format a similar angle of view will be covered by an 80mm lens, or on 6 × 7cm format by a 100mm lens. Consequently, the depth-of-field available is greatly reduced at any given aperture. How many people can afford studio lighting sufficiently powerful to permit them to use apertures as small as f32 or f45? Another good reason for moving back to the smaller format!

The system on which I have finally settled is based on a couple of Olympus OM1s with all Olympus Zuiko lenses. This is not because I think Olympus cameras are the best in the world, but because I prefer manual operation, their lenses which suit my taste and style of monochrome work, and the fact that they are inexpensive enough for me not to have to fret constantly about them. I should also add that I have never found any camera system totally satisfactory – so why tie up a lot of money in an expensive camera when a less expensive one can do the job just as well? I also keep camera accessories to a minimum, only using those which enable me to achieve my version of the nude photograph.

One useful accessory is the auto-winder for automatic film advance. This helps to maintain continuity of thought and stance when working through a picture session. It is also particularly useful when working in the studio with artificial light. My other main accessories include filters. I use yellow and red filters with black and white film to control contrast and skin tones. The red filter is particularly useful for turning Caucasian or lightly tanned skin tones to light tonal values in the final print. For the rare times when I shoot straight colour, I will mostly use an 81B warm filter, but I also use this same filter, lightly smeared with soft margarine, to provide variable diffusion. This works with far greater control than is ever possible using purpose-made soft focus or diffusion filters.

Although I do have a very good quality heavy-duty tripod, it is rarely used in my studio. It is used only when taking pictures by dim natural light or ordinary household artificial lighting. It is also used when copying my hand-tinted monochrome prints onto colour reversal film. Other than these occasions, I avoid the restrictions imposed when working from a tripod and will often try any means of avoiding the necessity for using one.

My most unusual accessory is an anamorphic lens, which is a supplementary lens attachment that screws onto the filter thread of a standard lens. This type of lens is often referred to as a 'squeeze' lens due to the strange sort of compressing and stretching distortion it produces. The common use for this type of attachment is in wide-screen cinema or audio-visual pre-

sentations. Once the image is compressed on film, the same lens is used on the projection lens to 'correct' the compression, producing a final image which is about 1.5 times wider than a conventional one. Left uncorrected, however, the squeezing distortion is, I feel, particularly well suited to the female nude. After a little experience, I found that I could use this accessory to manipulate the outline of the subject's figure, emphasising the beautiful curves of the female form. In some cases, I use this lens to produce what I would describe as an enhanced impression of reality, exaggerating or controlling natural curves. In others, I will deliberately grossly distort the figure to produce new shapes of the female form. I thoroughly enjoy using this accessory because it has enabled me to explore the nude in an exciting new way. Originally, I bought the lens specifically to use for two or three nude pictures. Now, I find its potential is unlimited.

I used to be so fussy about exposure that I became very interested in the zone system, spot-meters, and so on. However, since I now exclusively use one film, Ilford HP5, and always develop this in identical fashion – Agfa Rodinal at the 1 to 25 dilution for a time of 6 minutes – exposure has become much less of a concern. In fact, I really have to think very little about the problem and now tend to use the built-in TTL (through the lens) exposure meter system of my Olympus OM1. This is perfectly adequate for my current needs and in fact any built-in exposure meter system in today's sophisticated electronic marvels which usefully double as cameras is capable of providing perfectly exposed results.

On the rare occasions when I shoot colour, using reversal film, I often tend to use a separate hand-held exposure meter. This is invariably used with a white translucent invercone diffuser attachment over the light-sensitive cell for incident light readings. This type of reading measures the actual light falling on the subject and tends to be a little more accurate under difficult lighting conditions. It can certainly help to assure adequate highlight rendering on colour reversal film, which tends to be a little unforgiving towards exposure errors, particularly overexposure, when highlights can quickly become burnt out. The normal reflected light reading method works perfectly well

for most lighting situations, but difficult or unusual lighting, such as back-lit or strongly side-lit subjects, can benefit from incident measurements.

There are no absolute criteria by which correct exposure should be assessed. I am always having to manipulate exposure readings to provide the sort of result I require for a specific picture. So if, when working with black and white materials, I require a darker result to make the picture more sombre, I deliberately underexpose on the indicated reading. If, on the other hand, I require a lighter result, perhaps to simplify the picture or enhance the graphic effect, I overexpose. With a little experience it is really very easy to assess just how much to modify exposure for any desired effect. Very few of my pictures are taken at the exposure indicated by my camera's meter. Taking this technique one stage further, you can then develop and print your own images. Personally, I do not enjoy darkroom work, finding it too tedious. Yet it is also a vital step toward the end product. An artist would never consider handing over his nearly finished portrait for someone else to complete. Nor should the photographer.

The real value of darkroom work is that it permits me to produce exactly the sort of results I want. From film development through to the final print, everything is under my own control. I can guarantee that my developer is at the correct temperature, and can similarly check on the regularity of agitation. Although I tend mostly to standardize on just one film and developer for monochrome work, I do sometimes choose to uprate film speed and push process. I do this either for a more grainy result or, sometimes, to use a workable exposure at the picture-taking stage. Similarly, I may wish to reduce or increase negative contrast. This too is under my own control, through exposure and development, enabling me to tailor or fine tune negative characteristics to the required result.

Although I really shoot very little colour, I still insist on processing the films myself and, when required, make my own colour prints. When I do shoot colour, it is always colour reversal film for transparencies. This is processed in a rotary drum processor, using an independent E6 process – Photo Technology's excellent 'Chrome Six' chemistry. Having

once had a few colour films ruined by processing laboratories, I ensure that I now process my own to eliminate this extremely annoying problem.

I never shoot colour negative nowadays, but if I require colour prints, which I do occasionally for montage, etc, I make my own prints from transparencies. I used to use Cibachrome materials for these prints, but have more recently moved to Kodak R22 paper and the Photo Technology 'Chrome-R' chemistry. The inherently high contrast of slides is, I believe, more easily controlled by this method.

The advantages of making your own prints are manifold. Although I find printing particularly hard work and stressful, especially black and white printing where I may sometimes struggle for hours to achieve exactly the result I want, I consider it one of the most important stages in the process. For it is here, at this final stage, that the vital last opportunity is provided for any control or modification of the image. This is why the work is so important and so very difficult.

I sometimes start by making a contact sheet from my negatives. This is extremely useful when I have several similar negatives with only subtle differences in each shot, such as the model's facial expression or minute changes in pose. The set of miniature prints enables me to assess from which particular negative to make my final print. I don't use a purpose-made contact printing frame for this task, simply a sheet of thick plate glass. The negative strips are placed on the emulsion surface of a sheet of printing paper, the glass placed over the top to hold them in close contact with the paper, and then they are exposed to the light from my enlarger.

The next step is sometimes an exposure test strip, although I rarely now do this as I can fairly accurately assess correct exposure. I never use enlarging exposure meters, or colour analysers when printing colour. More often, the next stage after contact prints is to make a basic assessment print at what I consider to be the correct basic exposure. This is fully developed, after which I examine the print to determine how I want to control the final print.

The basic printing controls of shading and burning-in are used to control and manipulate tonal rendering in the final print. When shading, to lighten specific

areas of the print, I use either my hands – for larger areas – or a lump of Blu-Tack or plasticine on the end of a length of thin wire. The soft Blu-Tack or plasticine can be pressed and squeezed to mould into any shape. This can be invaluable, enabling quite small and tricky areas to be shaded.

For burning-in, which gives more exposure to selected areas of the print, I again use my hands, shading most of the print while directing a small shaft of light into a specific area of the picture. For more difficult areas, I use a large piece of opaque card with a hole cut in it. In this way, the area being burnt-in can be enlarged or decreased by raising or lowering the card.

Never expect to get this handiwork right first time. The difference between success and failure is totally dependent on one's experience and enthusiasm for the final result. You may have to spend almost an entire day in the darkroom just to get one print right. This usually only occurs when printing a negative for the first time. Once a perfect final print is achieved successive ones are usually much easier, but may still often require two or even three attempts to get it right.

I will go almost to any lengths to get the picture I want, though it is becomingly increasingly rare for me to use any special effect. I avoid in-camera effects, although I have occasionally experimented with both camera and subject movement during long exposures. While I use filters to a fairly large degree for my black and white work, I never use purpose-made special effect filters. The problem with this kind of filter effect is that once a few people use it, everyone else follows suit. We then end up seeing a glut of pictures all using the same set of effects. An original idea

Nude torso (*Miss Thompson*), *Camera Work* no. 26, July 1909, photogravure by Clarence H. White and Alfred Steglitz. Clarence White (1871–1925) was self-taught and influenced by the style and use of light of the Impressionists. Alfred Steglitz (1864–1946), who published and edited *Camera Work* from 1903 to 1917 had, the year before he began *Camera Work*, resigned from *Camera Notes* and founded *Photo-Secession*—with the stated aim of raising photography to the status of a profession.



becomes a cliché. Diffusion is probably the only effect I use with any regularity at the picture-taking stage.

I do however, make use of post-camera effects if they suit my purpose. Toning and tinting monochrome prints, which does constitute a kind of special effect, is one technique, and sometimes I will use montage to produce the desired end result. Montage is particularly useful when I have a picture idea which is either impossible or difficult to achieve from a 'straight' shot. This most frequently occurs when I wish to place a nude in an unusual situation, perhaps a public place, when to do so would cause the model intense embarrassment. Montage is also useful when the nude model needs specific lighting conditions not present in the surrounding landscape. The model is therefore 'shot' separately under the right conditions, and added to the background, which may be of a darker, more sombre tone.

Montage is the cutting out and joining together of separate elements from two or more pictures to make a single new picture. Such a technique is both simple and extremely versatile, giving the imaginative photographer a great deal of fun.

I don't often use elements from more than two pictures, although I will sometimes combine photography with drawing or painting. I usually start with one picture, often a land or seascape. This provides the idea and the basis for the finished picture. The second element of the montage, the nude figure, is usually shot specially for the montage and more often than

not is photographed in my studio. I then make a print providing the background scene, before cutting out the nude figure, using a scalpel, and mounting this onto the landscape. The montage is then copied to provide a master negative from which subsequent prints can easily be made.

Quite often, I will tone and tint a montage picture. This is sometimes carried out at or before the final assembly stage of making the montage, but on other occasions I will complete the montage in black and white, copy it, make a print from the master negative and only then tone and tint the picture.

So photography, and all its attendant techniques and skills, are a means to an end. They are a series of interrelated steps and procedures which have to be followed to achieve the final picture. Although, as I've pointed out, I do not enjoy all of these stages, others derive enormous satisfaction from them. There is a strong satisfaction in having controlled or manipulated the medium to achieve that final print.

I have never been very good at producing pictures of the subject as presented to me. I need time to think about it and decide how I would like to see the final picture. I work almost entirely in this way, visualising the end result before touching the camera. Indeed, nearly all of my pictures are the results of ideas. Visualisation is the key. Only when the image is totally finalised and clear in my mind do I think about cameras and equipment, aiming for that two-dimensional product of my imagination – the print.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR SUBJECT

The nude is merely another subject to the camera, no different in principle from the portrait, the landscape or a still life. And yet, for the photographer, it is somehow different. With a landscape, we have the differing features of the land itself – whether mountains, hills, valleys, lakes, trees and even the sky – to provide natural variation. Portraits too have their own significant variations, the unique features and expressions of personality that define character in a subject's face. Even a totally static subject, such as still life, provides variations in the choice of objects used and the permutations of their arrangement within the whole.

Of course the nude has its variations. Every person's body is different, and in some way is unique. Apart from the simple alternatives of gender, there is size, shape, proportion, texture and colour to create variation. These have now become unimportant to me for the straightforward reason that I prefer to explore

the potential of the nude as subject, almost entirely through one model, Angela Rebecca Fernandez.

My nude studies of Angela are an aspect of my mind, not of my vision. Nakedness would seem to imply vulnerability and yet, at the same time, it brings with it a sense of naturalness and a strange inner confidence. Remove people's clothing and you remove their own self-created, self-protecting image – the vision of themselves they choose to project to the world. This is often a false image, for many people try to project an image of what they would like to be, not what they are. Nakedness, for a photographer, provides the opportunity and freedom to explore both the subject and ourselves.

Life itself affects the mood and style of a photographer's work. Indeed, the shape of art and the effects of life are quite inseparable for any artist. The nude as a subject can flow and mould itself to changing moods—sometimes happy, humorous or even frivo-



Girls on the Beach, by W.J. Day, 1910. The naturalness of the pose and the use of a natural setting give the photograph an almost 'found' feel.

lous, at other times, serious, unhappy or sombre. The nude is capable of creating or reflecting these feelings through the picture.

Although quite early on in life I discovered an ability to draw and paint, I only became a good artist when I met Angela. Previously, I had taken photographs but I could not make pictures: it is a key difference and, for every aspiring photographer, a milestone in the mastery of a camera.

Making a start in the difficult area of photographing the nude is perhaps the trickiest part. It certainly was for me. Even if you are fortunate enough when starting out to live with your ideal model – and most people are not – it is difficult to know in which direction to head. A great deal of time will be wasted in discovering one's style and pictorial goal. Unfortunately there is no alternative to practice. However, an understanding of what you hope to achieve and, if possible, an understanding and sympathy for the person who is to become the subject is a very good place to start.

On the rare occasions in the past when I tried to photograph the nude using other models, I had no obvious aim or sense of direction. Least of all did I have an understanding of the model: my only intention was to take photographs of someone who was naked – I did not even understand why.

I did what most people do when they are beginning. I went about it in totally the wrong way. Seeing the challenge as purely technical, I would find a model, set up photoflood lighting according to principles learnt from a photographic textbook, select a roll of background paper, and then hope. I could do little more than pray that something magical might happen, that the pictures I wanted might simply materialise because the subject stood in front of the camera and the camera worked. Ultimately I would produce some stock photographs of a naked model, but that was precisely what they were – stock photographs, nothing more. There was no magic, no sparkle. Nor is there any satisfaction or slightest sense of achievement in imitating someone else's style or photographing by numbers within the confines of someone else's rules. Although I did not appreciate this at the time, I had no idea of *what* I wanted to

achieve. I had not attempted to visualise the finished picture.

If I knew then what I know now, perhaps I would have gone about it in a different way. My advice would be to take a long hard look at the work of others and decide what you do and what you do not like. Then, and this is more difficult, ask yourself why? By assessing the varied styles of nude photography produced by the better known exponents of the subject, it is possible to gain some understanding of the different ways in which the subject can be viewed and ultimately tackled.

The science behind the camera may be the same but the way in which each photographer views and portrays a subject varies enormously. Helmut Newton, for example, has produced female nudes which are portrayed as dominant, almost aggressive: he has even produced giant over-life-size prints of these pictures, reinforcing and accentuating this impression.

Ralph Gibson's nudes are often stark, even graphically simple, and almost geometric. He frequently uses only sectional truncated parts of the nude form. Many of the images have an almost luminous quality.

Bill Brandt's work is highly surrealistic, as would befit his influences. Extremely intellectual, his work always leaves the viewer wondering, wanting to ask a question and often feeling unsettled and a little uneasy. His style – which has passed into common use – is often of high contrast with a general simplification of tones, creating lines that are extremely bold and graphic. The indoor nudes are often worrying, set in large empty rooms. Frequently a door is left partially open, forcing the viewer's imagination into operation.

Anyone can read and understand the manual of a new, all-singing all-dancing medium format or 35mm SLR camera. It takes little effort to accept that it will offer to take the light reading for you, select the aperture and speed and even focus for you. But that is not nearly enough. It is possible, simply by studying the work of talented photographers to obtain a greater understanding of the subject, which provides not only a chance to examine the work of others but also provides an opportunity to assess one's own feelings towards the subject and the styles in which a single subject can be presented.

There is, I have discovered, a second and equally important factor which should be understood. Before you can hope to obtain genuine rewards from the nude, you must consider the relationship between the model and what you hope to achieve. At this stage, once an idea of the type of work you want is firmly established in the mind, one alternative is to choose a model who suits that particular style. Although this works very well in some circumstances, you would have to be extremely fortunate always to find precisely the right model. Far better is to find the model first and allow the model and yourself, working together, to dictate or determine the eventual style of the work produced.

Every model will have his or her unique qualities and personality. It is quite foolish to expect character to become immediately clear, particularly so if the model is a stranger. It will always take time before both model and photographer can relax, be natural and become themselves. It is essential to use the pre-studio time constructively. Get accustomed to each other and used to working together. Share ideas and allow the model to explain and develop her own ideas. In this way, in time, a good and valuable working relationship will be built up. This trust is the most solid of foundations for all future work and will prove to be the basis from which creative ideas develop. It is just such a relationship that has allowed my work with Angela to develop and progress.

The qualities which are essential for a good *nude* model are very different from those required for a *glamour* model. Good looks, classic proportions of the figure and ultimately size are relatively unimportant when it comes to the model. In fact, the person who is overconcerned about figure, appearance or image is unlikely to make a good nude model. Glamour models, therefore, are usually totally unsuitable.

By far the most important qualities in a nude model are a very real interest in the photographic work in hand, a willingness to become involved with and expand on ideas, and an ability to accept the occasional, even frequent, failure. Last of all, the model needs a determination to get things right.

Such qualities are obviously extremely difficult to find in any one person and finding such a person can

prove even more difficult. Indeed, finding someone who is suitable rather than someone who is merely prepared to become involved may be one of the greatest difficulties a photographer will come across.

For the well-heeled photographer who has not done much nude work, the professional model may at first seem the ideal choice. In theory at least, the professional model offers the distinct advantages of studio experience, attractive appearance and a conventionally good figure. You might be forgiven for expecting perfect, high quality and, artistic nude studies from the first session with such a model.

Certainly there are photographers who do successfully use such professional models, but all is not quite so simple as it seems. First, top-class professional models are expensive – very expensive. In order to justify such a high financial outlay you must be certain that you can sell the photographs. But while this presents few problems to experienced professional photographers who earn their living from such work, it also means that the pictures of such a model need to have a commercial value. And this automatically restricts the type and style of work which can be produced. This is limiting and likely to annoy, unless, that is, your personal taste coincides with popular commercial requirements – unlikely with serious nude work.

I have studied the work of those photographers – both well known and at club level – who use professional models and, with only a few exceptions, that work is inevitably based around well-lit, well-focused shots of attractive girls, but no more than that. This is the result of the second problem most people associate with using a professional model. Quite simply, you cannot afford the time needed to develop a good working relationship and understanding with the model. Nor is it likely that the model will have the time, or indeed the interest, to become fully involved with a photographer concept. Certainly, the model is unlikely to be able to contribute to those ideas.

There is a third reason why I have never found professional models satisfactory, particularly for my own style of work. This reason is that they are normally well groomed, with a high level of make-up and usually a fashionable hair style. Within the world

of professional models appearance often follows the latest dictates of fashion. This may be necessary for glamour or fashion photography but I prefer a more natural even 'ordinary' look.

The reason for this is really quite simple and obvious. The latest fashion in make-up and hair style may look absolutely wonderful – provided it is still the current fashion. After that, it becomes dated. Pictures soon start to look dated and old-fashioned. Besides, a natural or ordinary appearance is more versatile: pictures are more likely to have a timeless quality and, what is more, the model will be more readily adaptable to different even unfashionable ideas or styles of work.

The last remaining difficulty with using professional models, and one which will affect the newcomer to nude photography, is that most professional models are hired from an agency. Now an agency is quite obviously a business organisation, which makes its money acting as representative for several models. Of necessity such agencies look after their model's interests, particularly with regard to safety. After all, some weird people do manage to disguise their real intentions behind a camera!

Unless you are an established photographer of note or can prove your interest in the subject with a portfolio of photographs, – some of which should preferably have been published – you are unlikely to be allowed through the door. This creates a typical Catch-22 situation. Without a portfolio of suitable pictures you won't be able to hire a model, but without a model it is impossible to accumulate a set of suitable pictures. Where to now?

Amateur models are an alternative, sought by many would-be photographers of the nude. However, the word amateur covers a very broad spectrum. Unfortunately what many photographers now think of straight away as an 'amateur model' is a girl who spends her spare time doing glamour modelling for local camera clubs, considers herself semi-professional, and works part-time for the local Kissagram service. This type of model, once booked, will more often than not turn up with a bag full of frilly knickers, basque, suspender belts and a full range of fishnet stockings. If you are foolish enough to allow

the proposed session to take place, you will be treated to a series of predictable and clichéd poses. The only thing missing is likely to be a sunset backdrop and a wagonful of hay – you will be expected to provide this yourself!

Quite obviously, unless you wish to produce tabloid nudes, this type of model is of very little use to the photographer wishing to produce reasonably serious studies of the nude form. Better then to start looking elsewhere.

By now your options may seem a little strained. I know, I have been through most of them myself at one time or another.

One option which has no doubt occurred to most potential nude photographers from time to time is to ask a stranger, who you think has an interesting personality and face. This was once upon a time quite a good idea. Not anymore it isn't, not unless you want to spend a night at the local police station – helping them with their inquiries!

By far the safest method, and probably the only one remaining which holds any hope of success is to explain carefully what you are after and then ask amongst your own relatives and friends. In any case, it is precisely this group of people who are likely to turn out to be the best subjects for nude photography.

First, you will obviously know your own friends and relations pretty well. Second, there is already likely to be an existing bond of trust and respect. And third, you will already know a fair amount about each other's personalities. Yet of all the possible groups, this may be the most difficult one to approach, because of potential embarrassment. For a similar reason, many people close to you may find it difficult to accept such a request.

You are most likely to get a positive response from friends or relatives if you are clearly seen to be sincere. Your job is even easier if you have photographs of other models to show them what is expected, but if not show them a book on nude photography – perhaps this book – and explain precisely what you would like to achieve. Show them the pictures and take note of their comments. Give due regard to any worries or concerns which they may have and try to reassure them.

If they still remain concerned give them some time to think about your request. Leave your photographs or a suitable book with them, so that they can look through them in their own time. But do not wait too long before asking a second time. If left too long, people tend to forget about the request and push it aside. It may then even become an embarrassment to ask for your photographs or book to be returned.

Never be upset or disappointed if people decline the invitation, which they will. It is a mistake to make people feel obliged to agree and, in any case, if you virtually have to force a friend into accepting you will only create a disaster. The pictures will certainly be a failure and there would be a grave risk of harming a friendship or family relationships. If one person declines the request, accept it and ask someone else.

Among the most important attributes of a model are enthusiasm and interest. Quite frankly, without them there is little hope of producing good nude studies. This enthusiasm is far more important than the model's age or appearance, for good nude studies do not have to depend on a model's good looks.

To this end, it is possible to work with just about anybody who has an interest in the subject. A model may be of virtually any age, from a youth to an old person. It doesn't matter if they are male or female, slim or large, short or tall. The most important point to remember is that you should try to make the most of your subject's own characteristics. This will present little problem when both the photographer and the subject share the same interest and enthusiasm.

I find there is nothing worse than starting a nude session without at least some preparation. Planning and organisation are vital. Without them, you are wasting both your time and your model's.

I always try to work in exactly the same way. My first and most essential consideration is to have at least one, preferably two, strong picture ideas on which to work. It is pointless to commence a session without knowing what you intend to do. I am lucky in that I have little trouble thinking of ideas for nude pictures. In fact, it is quite rare that I should actually have to think up ideas, they usually come to me naturally. And once you have started taking photographs of nudes you will find that the pictures themselves gen-

erate new ideas, new approaches. I therefore spend a great deal of time looking at my pictures – which I enjoy doing in any event. Anything about them, from the smallest detail or gesture, can prompt an idea for another picture. And so it continues, the more pictures you produce, the more potential for further ideas.

The next step is to discuss these ideas with your model, who may have further suggestions which can be used immediately or incorporated in later pictures. It is often at this stage that the picture is finalised – long before a camera is even loaded with film. If necessary I make notes or quick sketches so that I can check that the idea is going to work visually and to assist me when setting up the shot.

I also make notes of anything which needs to be done before the session can commence and of any props and other items which are needed. Everything which is required for the proposed picture is organised, obtained or constructed *before* the photographic session.

In addition, keep props to a minimum. There has been a recent tendency for photographers to overload their sets. Sometimes this may work well but the vast majority of over-filled photographs just appear complicated. Too many props distract from the main subject. Also, the few special props I buy or make are retained for possible use in future pictures, though they are rarely used more than two or three times. Most of those I use are items which can be found around the house. The ones I make myself are usually fairly simple items which, with a little ingenuity, can be made easily by anyone. Only very few props are purchased, but we do have an unwitting source of supply for the more expensive items and it's free of charge! Since Angela is an agent for a mail order catalogue, occasionally we order goods on approval, use the items for our picture and then return them. Not strictly honest, perhaps! Alternatively, you could

Photography as an art object. *Silver Turban*, 1930, a chlorobromide by Dorothy Wilding (1893–1975). Wilding worked for both *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* and was influenced by the New Objectivity, a chic style of fashion photography that became popular in the late 1920s.



find a helpful shopkeeper who is willing to loan the occasional item. Provided you agree to return items in a good condition (you will obviously have to pay for them if not), this could turn out to be an excellent source of props.

Facial make-up is rarely a complex problem with nude photography. Male nudes usually don't need any and women are mostly better off wearing standard make-up unless, of course, facial features need to be emphasised for the picture. Only then is it necessary to apply make-up more heavily, with special attention to highlighting specific features, such as eyes and lips, using blusher to emphasise cheek-bones. If make-up is crucial but the model is unsure of the most effective means of applying it, you should probably seek the assistance of a professional make-up specialist, although this can be expensive.

Long hair is, I think, preferable for a model. It is difficult to change short hair styles to provide variety, whereas longer hair (provided that it is not too long) is infinitely variable. Even though Angela's hair is reasonably long, it can be tied back, plaited, frizzed or smoothed back tightly, using hair cream or oil, to provide a number of different styles. A change of hair style can change a person's appearance quite considerably, and is a very effective way of developing a specific mood for certain pictures. For other photographs, I have used hair deliberately ruffled to provide an unkempt appearance. Even working with slightly wet hair can help provide variety and a subtle change for different effects. Once you have explained to the model the effect you are after, it is best to let her tackle her new hair style. You shouldn't need to call in a stylist.

The first time that anyone attempts to photograph a nude is usually a nerve-wracking experience, both for the model and the photographer. This can be minimised if the session is properly planned and the desired image is pre-visualised. If the model or the photographer is nervous or shy it is best not to forge ahead with the session. Wait until you both feel comfortable.

Many photographers use a tape recorder to provide quiet background music in an attempt to make a session more relaxed. This can do little harm and

works for many people, although I find it distracting. When taking photographs I need all of my concentration to get the desired image on film. Any form of distraction – including music – destroys my concentration and the pictures suffer. That said, if music works for you, then use it.

My own method of starting a session, on the rare occasions when I am working with a new model, is to allow him or her to undress before inviting her to join me for a cup of coffee or tea while we discuss the proposed pictures. Once a model realises that you are not goggle-eyed, constantly looking her up and down, she will quickly relax. However this is unlikely to work so well if the photographer is embarking on his first nude session.

A simple variation on the method which often suits a newcomer to nude photography is to invite the model to undress and put on a robe. Then have a drink while listening to quiet background music and discussing the pictures. Ten minutes or so of conversation in this way is usually enough to get the session off to a relaxed and productive start.

It is at this stage of any nude session that the value of all the laborious preplanning becomes obvious. Provided you know exactly what you intend to do and how to go about it, everything progresses smoothly throughout the session, enabling you to achieve the desired result. Originality is one thing, but it should not be mistaken for chaos.

Since almost every picture which I produce will at some time or another be published, I ask new models to sign a release form advising them of the fact, and stating that they are not entitled to a publication fee. Although you may feel it unnecessarily business-like to go through this procedure, it is better to have it in writing, so ensuring you avoid any possible law suit when a model might suddenly claim that she had been misled.

Although it has to be done, I don't really like the sort of relationship with a model which needs such an agreement. It becomes a barrier to friendship and the kind of relationship out of which an imaginative photographic session can emerge. That is another important reason why I work mainly with the same model.

THE STUDIO

I am ambivalent about studio work. While in a cold technical sense it is a subject which holds little interest, it is also one which is very important.

The studio is where many photographers struggle intently, in an effort to produce the desired pictures. It is the means to an end. Personally, I have to force myself to stop and think about my work positively to realise just how important my studio really is to me. My photography of the nude depends very heavily on my studio facilities. Take these facilities away and I would be lost.

The advantages of working in the studio are immense. Virtually all of my nude photographs are based on ideas. I know what picture I want and exactly how it will look when it is finished. The studio is often central and crucial to the fulfilment of these ideas. Without such facilities, many of my pictures would never come to fruition.

The studio enables me to control and construct my

images, from the concept of an idea, right through to completion. Although, for instance, natural light is ideal, it will always be the photographer's master, not his slave. Only the studio provides the means to control the quality of light. Such control is of paramount importance to a great deal of photographic sessions involving nude models.

My studio facilities also provide other essential benefits, all of which are important in the construction of a picture, and all of which provide the means for almost total control of the final image.

The studio enables you to progress towards the desired end result. Few photographers will take the perfect photograph at the first attempt. The first shot reveals not only what is right, but also those elements, perhaps in composition, gesture, lighting, or mood that need to be altered. Look at your photographs constructively, examining ways in which the image needs to be modified. The more experienced you

become, the quicker you will recognise how to put matters right. In time you might find that you need one photographic session as a starting point, a second for modification, and a third for the final, desired image. It's helpful if your model is also a model of patience!

The studio, with its controlled facilities, allows me these extra chances to get things as I want them, *when* I want them. It also allows me to leave everything set up after a photo session, so if I do need to go back for a second attempt, everything is in place. Time will not be wasted endlessly recreating the set. Having thought long and hard about modifications I can quickly sort them out before resuming my intense relationship with that particular photographic idea.

When designing your own studio by all means consult 'how to do it' books, but do not be misled. The glossy, idealised version rarely resembles reality. It will cost a fortune to equip, and be wholly unsuited to your needs.

Such a professional studio will be fairly large, packed with every kind of accessory. There will be a considerable range of lighting, often both tungsten and flash, some of it on overhead gantries or rails. Lighting accessories will range from simple conical snoots, barn-doors and honeycombs, to huge window lights and soft boxes. There will be a good range of different sized reflectors, both white and black (for absorbing light), and diffusers. Background systems, too, will be wonderfully sophisticated, with a choice of colours and types, all operated by a labour-saving chain or rope pulley system. In addition, there will probably be at least one model's changing room and a well-equipped kitchen for refreshments. But do you really need all this?

I, for one, can but dream of such luxury. My own studio is in a large spare bedroom, in my house, which I have commandeered. Although it measures only 3m x 4m (9.8ft x 13.1ft) it also serves as my studio, office, darkroom and drawing office. Within the extremely confined floor space of 12sq m (129sq ft) there is located a desk, 4.5m (14.8ft) of work-top and cupboard units, my camera equipment, enlarger, processing and studio lighting equipment, and a filing cabinet. Of the remaining available space only about

6sq m (64.5sq ft) can be used constructively for picture taking. To use even this small area, I first have to move seemingly endless sundry items of junk.

My lighting 'system' comprises three elderly 'amateur' studio flash units, three white flash brollies, a broken set of barn-doors, black and silver honeycomb attachments, a flashmeter and several pieces of white cardboard which I use as reflectors. In addition, there is a silver flash brolly and an old second-hand lighting stand which I use for holding and positioning my cardboard reflectors.

I have no background system whatsoever. Indeed, I don't even have a roll of background paper. But I do have a wall. It's the end wall of my room and instead of using proper backgrounds, I simply cover this wall with emulsion paint, using any shade of white which I can find.

Of course, it is always possible to hire a professional studio. However, unless you live in a city or very large town, such facilities are rarely available. Some photographic retail shops have a small studio which may be available for hire but seldom will it better than my room, and on top of that you will have the aggravation of getting your equipment there. Also note that most small studios are really a backroom and rarely suitable for anything more than portraiture. Some commercial photographers do have quite reasonable studio facilities, but are rarely willing to hire them out to the general public.

Good professional studios are available for hire, but at a price. The high capital outlay necessary to establish such a studio dictates that the hire charges will be substantial. Although it is possible to hire by the hour, this is seldom sufficient time in which to complete any worthwhile work. If you do need to use such a studio, it is probably better to hire it for half or even a full day. Many studios also have models available, although

Nude, London 1952, by Bill Brandt (1906–1983). The photographer studied with the American photographer Man Ray and was influenced by Surrealism. Brandt's work is both striking and recognisable. While refusing to accept the photograph as an aesthetic object, he said of the value of photography, 'We are . . . too obsessed to stand and stare'.



they are mostly only willing to do glamour or topless modelling.

Hiring a professional studio might be useful for the occasional picture idea, when space and professional facilities are essential, but such circumstances are rare. If I ever think of such an idea, I quickly reject it in favour of one that can be realised in my own studio. It's cheaper and easier. Nor is the availability of models an advantage. As I have already explained, they are unlikely to excel at the kind of work I'm advocating, and even if they were the short time you have with them rules out the opportunity for establishing a creative partnership.

If possible improvise a studio at home, or at a friend's. Basically, all that is required is two or perhaps three studio lights and a couple of reflectors – these can be either purchased or made at home from a wooden frame over which white fabric is stretched. Alternatively, you can use sheets of white cardboard positioned on chairs or attached to a spare lighting stand. The only other piece of equipment which may be necessary is a roll of background paper and its stand. Such a studio may be erected and dismantled in minutes. When not in use, the equipment can easily be stored, taking up very little space.

When choosing lighting for studio, permanent or temporary, the choice is between tungsten and flash. Having worked with both, I recognize their relative merits and drawbacks, and would recommend flash.

Inexpensive tungsten lights, such as photofloods, do offer the benefit of an economical means of setting up a studio. This is particularly useful for the beginner who may not wish to invest a large sum of money in an item about which he has initial reservations. Such lighting can provide adequate control for most circumstances, and there is quite a wide range of lighting accessories and alternative reflectors available to expand the system.

Tungsten lights are like ordinary household light bulbs with overrun filaments to provide greater light output. This tends to create a few problems – problems with which I always found it difficult to live. First, the light output from such lamps is quite low, making it necessary to use quite long exposure times unless fast films are used. Second, the bulbs do not last

very long, due to being overrun, and both light output and colour temperature (the actual colour of the light) will diminish with prolonged use. Finally, the bulbs get hot – very hot! During even a relatively short photographic session this can become extremely uncomfortable for both the photographer and the model.

Studio flash, on the other hand, yields very few problems. Light output from the flash tube is relatively high, allowing the use of smaller apertures. The actual flash duration is very short, so avoiding problems of subject movement during long exposures. Light intensity and colour temperature remain virtually constant throughout the life of the flash tube, which is quite long (I have been using my own studio flash units for four years without having to replace a tube). Finally, there is very little heat produced by studio flash. They therefore offer much more pleasant working conditions for both model and photographer.

Studio flash is not the poor relation of tungsten systems. Most flash equipment is now equipped with a modelling lamp, which is usually a domestic light bulb of between 100 to 150 watts, providing a light of similar quality but lower intensity to the flash tube, so enabling you to pretest its effectiveness on the model. The versatility of studio flash is now quite vast, with a considerable range of lighting accessories obtainable for most systems currently available.

Modern flashmeters make complicated exposure calculations unnecessary. They are just like an ordinary exposure meter but are designed to measure the brief duration of flash. They mostly work on the reliable incident light reading method, measuring the light actually falling on the subject, and are capable of making accurate measurements even when several flash heads are used.

Most studio flash units are equipped with a slave cell. When using multiple flash heads, the firing of just one will trigger any others equipped with this light-sensitive slave cell. A synchronisation lead is therefore required only between one light (usually the main light) and the camera.

Studios give photographers control over most aspects of a shoot, probably the most important element being light. The intensity of light is obviously

important, but so too is the *quality* of light. The use of studio lighting accessories makes it possible to control this to a very fine degree.

Although lighting might seem very simple, it is perhaps the one aspect of photographing the nude which has taken me the longest to learn. My initial mistake was in failing to appreciate what effect was produced by the different lighting accessories, alone and in combination. The more time you experiment with your equipment in the early stages, the more you will realise its potential and limit possible future problems. Others too make this elementary mistake. At a camera club 'studio evening' I saw people use lights and fit lighting accessories with no real understanding of what they were doing or hoped to achieve. An understanding of the basic lighting accessories and what they do is invaluable.

The lamp reflector which surrounds the actual light source – either a flash tube or a tungsten bulb – controls both the intensity and quality of light which reaches the subject. The standard reflector supplied with most lighting units provides a fairly high light intensity with a hard tone, which most closely resembles direct bright sunlight. Shadows are deep, quite sharply defined, with just a little softening at the edges.

Using the same light source, the quality of light can be made even harder, with greater intensity, by fitting a reflector with a highly polished interior instead of the standard satin finish. Shadows will therefore become even darker, with more clearly defined edges. Such hard lighting is not particularly flattering to the young female nude, but may be good for depicting texture and sharp detail.

Matt surfaces on the inside of lamp reflectors will soften the light, making shadows less dense and softening their edges. Generally, the larger this type of reflector, the softer will be the quality of the light. With these larger reflectors, the light can be further softened by fitting a small conical reflector in front of the main one (suspended in a central position by thin wire stays) to reflect the light source back into the main reflector, so eliminating any direct light reaching the subject.

Light can be made even softer by using a flash brolly. The light is directed backwards, away from

the model, into a large white brolly, where it is reflected onto the subject as extremely soft light. Although such brollies are usually white, other colours are available. A silver brolly will produce slightly harder light, while a gold one is useful for warming-up the colour of flash to provide more pleasing skin tones on colour film.

Another very useful method of softening the quality of light is by diffusion. This produces a better-aimed source of light than one bounced off a brolly and therefore produces stronger modelling. The best way of diffusing light is by directing the light source through a white translucent material. A diffuser can easily be made from tracing paper, frosted or opal perspex, or white fabric. Flash brollies with a single thin skin of fabric also make ideal diffusers. Instead of directing the flash away from the model, as when using bounced flash, direct it at her so that the light passes through the brolly's fabric.

For most studio flash systems, there are special soft boxes or window lights available. These resemble a large box-shaped wire frame, covered on four sides with black opaque material. The front has a white translucent panel to diffuse the light, while the back is left open, enabling it to fit over the flash head.

The art of lighting the nude is as much in the control of shadows as it is in the control of light. A great deal can be done to control the quality and type of shadow through the lighting accessories already discussed. However, the density of these shadows can be further controlled by the use of reflectors.

All that is necessary is to position a reflector on the shadowy side of the model, so reflecting light back into the shadows to brighten them and fill in any gaps. The degree of fill-in can be controlled by moving the reflector closer to or further away from the model.

Additional lights can also be used to lighten shadows or provide fill-in. This method is particularly useful when it is not possible to position a reflector near the model, as often happens when shooting full-length nude studies. To position a reflector near enough to the model to have any effect would necessitate the reflector being in the finished picture. A fill-in light can effectively be positioned some distance from the model, so avoiding such problems.



It is necessary to exercise caution, however, when using lights to provide fill-in. It is all too easy to end up with additional shadows, cast by the fill-in light. These secondary shadows are not always easy to see and the unwary will surely fall victim to this at some time. The problem is solved to some degree by using bounced or reflected light for fill-in. This produces softer, less well-defined shadows, so even if present they will be less noticeable. A good tip when trying to assess shadow densities or when applying fill-in of any sort is to observe the subject through half-closed eyes – squinting. This will give a reasonable idea of how the lighting contrast will record on film.

Another major problem often occurs at the early stages, when setting up the studio lighting. Unless you have already established the look of your picture and the best way to achieve it, the potential for wasted time and mistakes is enormous. Since lighting is a vital ingredient for a successful result, it is unacceptable to hope that the lighting is ‘near enough’ right. Near enough is not good enough. The only way is the *right* way. Even now, after a fair amount of experience with the subject, I find it essential to follow the same system. I gradually build up the lighting step by step, working positively towards the desired result.

Unless the background lighting is to be unusual, I always start building up my lighting with the main light, or modelling light as it may be referred to. At this stage this will be the only light which is switched on. It is then a simple matter to move this light around the subject, raising or lowering it as required, until the desired effect is obtained.

Once the position for the main light has been determined, it stays there. The next task is to determine if any fill-in is required, to lighten the density of any shadows created by the main light.

At this stage I have to admit to a preference for using reflectors to provide fill-in. The reasons for this are simple. Reflectors help to ensure a much more

effective amount of fill-in with the degree of reflection depending entirely on the type of the main light in use, and the reflector’s distance from the model. The use of a reflector, as opposed to a light, also eliminates the possibility of multiple shadows.

If an additional light does have to be used to provide the fill-in, I bounce it back into a brolly or diffuse it, so softening the lighting quality. Even so, it may be difficult to match the lighting balance so easily provided by a reflector.

The next step, if required, will be to introduce additional light for a specific effect. This might involve extra light to the hair, or highlighting a side of the face. But when creating this additional light beware that it does not unexpectedly fall on another part of the subject or the surroundings. A lighting stand with a boom extension is extremely useful at this stage so that the effect light can, if necessary, be positioned above the model without the stand encroaching into the picture area.

Other lighting accessories are also often used on an effect light. Barn-doors, for example, are particularly useful when trying to avoid the problems of light inadvertently striking other areas within the picture, and accessories such as conical snoots or honeycomb attachments are useful for concentrating or directing the light more accurately at one small specific area.

The background lighting may be the last to be set up, unless this is to be lit in an unusual way, in which case it may be necessary to tackle it first. If so, check that the subject lighting does not overpower and wash out the background effect.

Usually it is only necessary to light the background evenly. However, even such an apparently simple task does require some care in order to ensure that this lighting does not in any way encroach on the subject. It is best, whenever possible, to maintain some distance between the subject and the background, so avoiding such problems. Likewise, when creating a straightforward background lighting effect, such as a more brightly lit central spot, it is essential to view the final lighting set-up as a whole, to assess the overall lighting balance.

More ambitious lighting effects for the background are best set up before starting on the main subject

Bill Brandt’s *Nude, Campden Hill, London 1949*. Brandt discovered that extreme wide-angle lenses produced a curious mingling of human figure and background: a discovery that he used to develop the style that internationally made him Britain’s best-known photographer.

lighting. Pieces of card, etc, can be cut to different shapes and positioned in front of a light which is directed onto the background. They will cast interesting shadows onto the background and can be very useful in breaking up what might be a large area of rather boring plain tone or colour.

Important though lighting is and all the other pieces of equipment, none of that is any great value unless you have the right model. She or he must be right not only in character and looks, but also in helping you to get the right photograph. A good model will share with the photographer a genuine interest and enthusiasm for the finished pictures. It is this very enthusiasm which has made my own particular work such a pleasure. We both accept the likelihood of failure is quite high on the first attempt and are always keen to go back and shoot it again, and again if necessary, until we obtain the results which we both want.

Successful studio photography of the nude depends heavily on both the photographer and the model developing a 'feeling' or 'involvement' with the subject. Each will, when things are right, become almost attuned to the subject, producing a kind of heightened involvement with the work. This in turn will reap the benefits of exciting pictures and immense satisfaction.

The finest nude studies are still considered by some to be those which are reminiscent of early nude studies. I find this definition far too limiting. For me, the essential ingredients of 'classic' nude photography are its magical and lasting qualities. That is why I do not attempt to mimic past representations of the nude. They do not have a stranglehold on the finest photographs. All that matters is my own approach. If you are 'crushed' and 'dwarfed' by the achievements of previous photographers, instead of being inspired by them to pursue your own goals, you are unlikely to succeed.

In other words, reject any notion of a 'classic' pose or 'classic' lighting. The nude studies of the past are only considered classic because of their lasting beauty. Imitations and copies of such pictures will never capture the same qualities, but become clichés. Surely our task is far more demanding than that. We are attempting to create the classic photographs of the future.

There is, therefore, no formula for producing clas-

sic nude studies. Don't look to established poses or lighting patterns to find the answer. You have to discover it anew each time you tackle a different idea. Pose and light the nude in any way you choose – for texture and form, or flat and stark for graphic effect – and remember there is no 'style' of nude photography which can guarantee classic status.

The modern approach to nude photography certainly avoids a slavish recreation of established techniques. Just look at the enormously varied work from contemporary photographers, revealing many different styles. So what, then, is the modern contemporary style of nude which so many decry? It is a style which leaps beyond the confines of the past.

Time cannot stand still. We must all progress. To remain in a static position, no matter how appealing that position may seem, is surely to stagnate. The modern or contemporary approach is no more than it suggests. And that, surely, is the way forward. The way to progress.

In more recent times we have, at least until now, experienced the relative freedom to express and project images of the nude almost entirely within the limits only of our own imagination. The only restraints imposed upon us are those of common sense and decency. This freedom has permitted us to expand our own creative and artistic abilities, often to new levels and, sometimes, in different ways.

It is this creative ability which is so essential to any photography but, particularly to that of the nude human form. It enables us to develop our ideas and, with a little technical and practical ability, bring these ideas to fruition.

If the creative talents of the imaginative photographer are to be developed to their full potential, it can only come about by using and expanding the imagination. And, simultaneously, he or she must strive to improve technical ability so enabling the picture idea to be transformed successfully into the final photograph.

The studio is a key factor in this process, giving the only available opportunity to exercise almost total control over the photograph as it emerges from the initial idea to the final image. It is an ally not to be ignored.

AVAILABLE INDOOR LIGHT

My own style of nude photography relies quite heavily on having total image control, which only the studio can really provide. However, I do at times enjoy working within the restrictions imposed by available light work.

Although I think that using available light for photographing the nude imposes restrictions, many would disagree. They argue that working only by available light (meaning both natural and household light) offers distinct advantages. Certainly, I must concede that there are many photographers who have worked and are working very successfully by available light. They make excellent use of it, so giving their photographs a degree of 'naturalness'. An added bonus is that expensive studio lighting and all the accessories which go with it are unnecessary. Some might even argue that since the nude is a 'natural' subject it should therefore be lit 'naturally'.

In reply I would argue that, first, nudes photo-

graphed by studio lighting do not necessarily have to be 'unnatural' in any way. With care, it is possible to produce pictures which are indistinguishable from those taken by natural light. And studio lighting also provides the photographer with a choice. If preferred, the subject can be lit with a heightened, dramatic effect. Second, I believe the expense of such lighting equipment can be justified in the potential for extra control. And third, I don't believe that there is any specific way in which the nude should be lit. To make such 'rules' merely creates restrictions.

That said, I do enjoy working by available light, but only if I have an idea for a picture which demands its use. More often than not, it will be the character of available light which will provide the idea for the picture. In this respect, my attitude and approach to the subject is virtually identical to that for my studio nudes. The picture idea itself will be the stimulus, and will determine the method for realising it.

However, there are special problems associated with working by available light when indoors. These are mostly dependent on the type of available light, its intensity and direction. All are quite easily solved, although the act of solving them will sometimes influence the style of picture produced. An understanding of these special problems and their solutions can greatly assist one's own creative attitude to photography of the nude using available light. Such an understanding will make it possible to formulate ideas for pictures in a more positive and constructive manner.

Available light photography of the nude, as suggested, does not exclusively refer to daylight. Domestic household room lighting is also lighting which is 'available', and since we spend a considerable part of our lives under artificial light it is as, if not more natural, than daylight.

Such lighting can be quite fascinating. It is very rarely anything like daylight, but at the same time is extremely varied in its application and character. Some domestic household lighting is extremely bland and boring. But much of it is also highly effective and interesting.

Table and standard lamps, household spotlights, wall-mounted lights and even light-shades themselves are all used for effect within the home. Although many such lights are static, mounted in a fixed position, others may be moved around and their position or height varied. This can provide some means for control, although usually within fairly strict confines.

However, it is most usually the character of domestic lighting, or perhaps the way the light falls on a certain part of a room, that provides me with the idea for a picture. Very rarely do I find it necessary to start moving domestic lighting around, and only then, within its own natural or in-built limitations. Any more than this and I might as well return to my studio. Generally, I like to leave lights where I find them, for it is their normal position that makes me notice interesting characteristics or effects.

With available indoor daylight, we are restricted to that which enters through windows. And not only is it variable in character and intensity of daylight (depending on where one lives, the direction in which one's windows face the weather and time of day and

year), but it will also be modified by the interior design. A dark room decor, for example, will produce higher contrast between highlights and shadows, whereas light-coloured decor will reflect some light back onto the subject to lower the contrast. Taking photographs by indoor daylight can therefore be extremely hazardous. It is the complete antithesis of studio work, where nothing is left to chance, and where you are in control from the outset.

A further drawback is that photographs taken using available daylight, are remarkably similar. They display the same kind of light, and while many such studies are extremely attractive, too many of them are boring. Available indoor daylight is for me, to be used only when its character is the stimulus for an idea. I would not therefore expect to produce such a large number of nude studies as in the studio, or by domestic lighting.

A great deal of indoor nude photography will depend quite heavily on room settings to provide variety from one shot to the next. Even around one's own home, it is surprising just how many different possibilities there are. It isn't necessary to use an entire room as a setting for a single picture, although of course this can be done if required. Quite small areas or sections of a room can be used for individual photographs and ideas. Since each may have its own unique atmosphere and character, you will find that each room can provide a number of wholly different and interesting backgrounds. Although such potential will take considerable time to exhaust, it will not be that long before you start to seek other, less-familiar settings.

Instead of going to the expense of hiring rooms in stately homes or castles, etc, why not ask a friend or relative if you can use a room to provide an interesting new setting. But while you may be inspired by seeing new decors, don't be disappointed if their owners turn down your request to use them as a backdrop for nude photography. Not everyone will share your enthusiasm!

Nude, Campden Hill, London 1977 by Bill Brandt. Once again the figure becomes part of an interior landscape.



Nude studies by available indoor light, whether artificial or natural, depend to a great extent on the quality and type of light by which the photographs are taken. Diffused daylight is probably the most popular for window-light photography of the nude, providing soft, delicate lighting without any hard transition from highlight to shadow. Bright sunlight can also be effective. Direct sunlight through a window may cast interesting light patterns onto a wall or furnishings. This can sometimes be used effectively to highlight and emphasise the model, or indeed parts of the body. One way in which it is possible to exercise some control over natural light is by holding tracing paper or white fabric, against the window, so diffusing hard direct sunlight.

Artificial household lighting varies, depending on the type of domestic light source. Fluorescent lighting is rarely very attractive, producing rather flat, featureless results, but most other domestic lamps can be very effective indeed. Ordinary light bulbs, especially the clear glass type, produce quite hard lighting with deep, well-defined shadows. Other light bulbs, made of opal or pearl glass, will produce a similar but somewhat softer effect. The characteristics of all domestic lighting will be affected, to some extent, by where and how it is situated. The possibilities and permutations are almost endless, but the important consideration is to use those characteristics to your best advantage.

With available indoor light photography of the nude, there are two major problems which have to be dealt with. These are high contrast and low light levels. These inherent difficulties greatly influence the type of work which can be produced. Sometimes we can manipulate these problems and turn them into assets. At other times we find that we are continually struggling against them.

The first and most obvious of these factors is low light intensity. This makes it necessary to use relatively long exposure times and large lens apertures merely to obtain correct exposure. In turn, this makes it necessary to use static poses; exposures may sometimes be so long that the pose is dictated by the need to hold a gesture for an uncomfortably long time. In most circumstances it is essential to use a tripod to

avoid camera movement during these long periods. The use of a tripod imposes further restrictions because you will not be able to move around the subject freely. Unfortunately, there is often little choice in the matter. The lighting conditions dictate the required photographic technique.

Fast films might seem to be the answer, but even these will require long exposure times in many lighting situations – especially when working by domestic household lamps. Although we can uprate film speed and extend development to compensate for the underexposure (push processing) in an effort to shorten exposure times under such conditions, this will produce a considerable increase in the film's grain size.

Uprating film speed and push processing can be a valuable technique in that the characteristics it produces, which might normally be considered a disadvantage, can be used constructively to enhance the mood or atmosphere of the final picture. The large coarse-grain structure and high contrast produced by this simple technique can, in the right circumstances, be used imaginatively. I would not like to suggest that the technique is suitable for all nude studies in available light, but when an idea for a picture lends itself to the technique, it can be very effective.

Another problem which can sometimes be turned to our advantage lies within the long exposure times which are so often necessary. Sometimes it may be possible to incorporate an element or impression of movement within a picture. This is quite easily achieved either by camera or subject movement during the course of the exposure.

Camera movement is the most difficult of these alternatives over which to exercise any real control. For this reason, results tend to be rather hit or miss. In principle at least, the idea is very simple. With the camera either mounted securely on a tripod or hand-held, it can be moved a small amount during the exposure period. This will produce a blurring of the image, sometimes also resulting in double imaging. It is usually necessary to make several exposures in this way to get one satisfactory result.

Subject movement is often easier to control, and works in much the same way except it is the model who moves, not the camera. An example of this

technique might involve the model changing the position of her arms, hands, legs or head, approximately half way through the exposure. Used imaginatively, such techniques can produce interesting and sometimes quite startling results.

The commonest problem encountered with nude studies taken by available indoor light is that of high lighting contrast. This will result either in dense blocked-up shadows or burnt-out highlights, devoid of any detail.

The only really effective way of dealing with this problem is by the careful and thoughtful use of reflectors (either pieces of white cardboard or free-standing frames constructed from timber and covered in white fabric). Purpose-made reflectors can, of course, be purchased if preferred, but I always feel that this is something of an unnecessary expense when you can so easily improvise.

The reflectors are used to reflect light from the source, whether it is daylight or artificially produced, onto the shadowy side of the model to provide fill-in and lighten the density of the shadows. The amount of fill-in can be controlled by positioning the reflector nearer or further away from the model.

The real problems with contrast arise when the potential picture takes in a relatively large area of the room. In this case, if the reflector is to have any effect,

it must be included in the picture – not a very satisfactory solution.

The only alternative is to reduce the negative contrast through exposure and development. However, to achieve this it is necessary to overexpose the film, and then cut back or shorten the development time. This will make the resulting negatives slightly easier to print, due to the lowering of contrast and compression of the tonal range. Unfortunately, it also necessitates even longer exposure times than already demanded from such low levels of illumination, creating further potential problems with movement during exposure and short depth-of-field through the large lens apertures required.

With such a difficult situation, it is often better to think of an idea for a picture which will lend itself to high lighting contrast, rather than trying to get around or solve the problem. This is often possible by allowing the lighting conditions to dictate the mood and character of the picture. In other words, don't attempt to transform a situation into something else in order to obtain the picture in your mind. Use the imagination, but apply it to the particular situation, creating images which incorporate the existing mood and character of the scene. With available indoor light photography, it is necessary to match the style of the work to the setting and lighting conditions.

OUTDOOR NUDES

For many, photography of the nude in outdoor settings seems ideal. The most 'natural' subject is placed in the most 'natural' context. The idea has certainly been popular with photographers almost from the beginning of photography, so much so that it could be considered one of *the* classic nude themes.

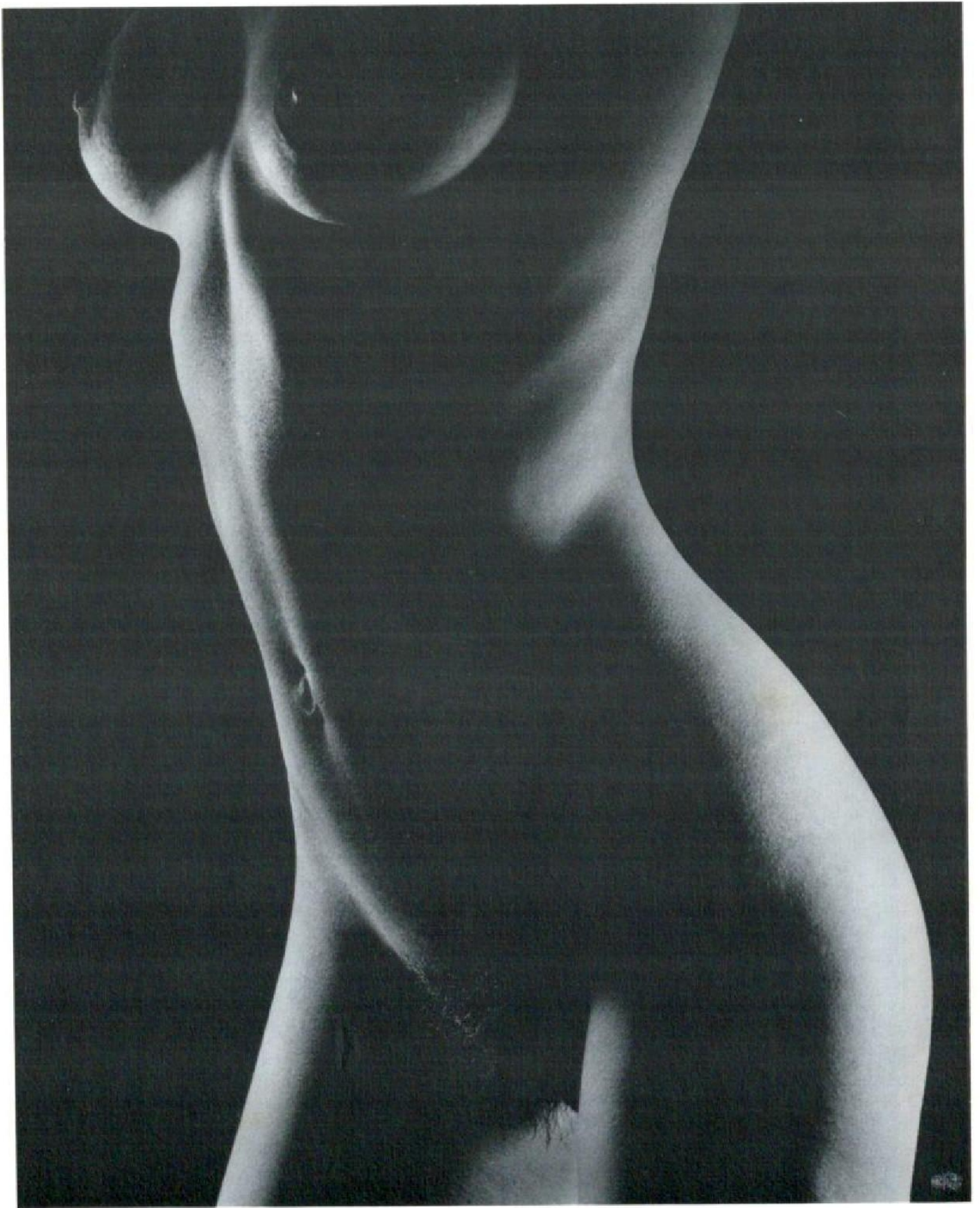
Working outside does indeed offer certain advantages, mainly to those who prefer working with natural daylight. Also, the outdoor settings obviously offer a far greater range of backgrounds than can be arranged in the studio, or by available indoor light.

However, I have recently looked at the work of some very well-known photographers who have taken outdoor nude photographs, and at the extremely limited amount of my own work on the same theme. Surprisingly, very little of it, if indeed any, actually appears 'natural'. In fact, many outdoor nudes actually appear even more contrived than those taken in the artificial environment of the studio. When you

consider that *Homo sapiens* once roamed naked across the landscape of our planet, it is curious that pictures on such a theme appear contrived. I believe the cause is the fact that we no longer visualise ourselves in this way, having become totally accustomed to wearing clothing. In fact the only place where it is now natural to be naked is in the privacy of the home. (Glamour nude photography, on the other hand, is so utterly artificial, dealing entirely in stereotypes and telling us nothing about the humanity of the subject, that it seems entirely suited to a different setting. It looks wrong in the home, but acceptable outdoors.)

At this point I must confess that I like very few photographs of outdoor nudes, least of all those which

David Chamberlain, 1985. The contribution of light and dark across the body attempts to force the figure into the background; the sharp edges of the outline refuse to allow that to happen.



set the nude against a rural landscape. A large part of this problem relates to the fact that my other great love in photography is landscape. For me, these are two quite separate subjects, and when they are combined they fight for my attention. Unfortunately, there are rarely any winners in this conflict, and the photograph is the loser. My own way out of this dilemma is by concentrating on the nude and reducing the significance of the landscape.

Another aspect of outdoor nude photography which causes me considerable difficulty is having to accept unsatisfactory lighting. Natural daylight is rarely perfect for the landscape *and* the nude. This view stems from the fact that I have strong ideas about both these subjects. So when I view a landscape I usually know immediately what should be the correct lighting effect. If I was to photograph the landscape by itself, I would return at the right time of day and at the right time of year to get the right lighting. Rarely would it be possible to insert a nude study into this scene and expect the nude to be perfectly lit too.

The few pictures which I have taken of a nude in a landscape have been produced in a different way, using montage. This enables me to work in much the same way as I do when in my studio – that is, with everything under my control, so that I am not a slave to the prevailing lighting conditions. I am therefore able to construct precisely the type of image which I require.

This is always a two-part affair. The landscape comes first, though rarely at that point have I even thought about inserting a nude into the scene. It is only later, when I have the finished landscape picture, that I might decide to introduce this element.

The nude figure for such a picture is always shot in my studio, using studio flash. This enables me to light the nude in exactly the way I want. This may not necessarily be in harmony with the lighting of the landscape, and doesn't really matter. The important point is that the finished picture is as I want it. Even when the finished work is to be in colour, both original photographs will be in monochrome. They will be toned and hand-tinted, usually at a later stage.

A print will be made of both elements, the landscape and the studio nude, ensuring that the scale of

each is as required. Using a scalpel, the nude will be carefully cut out and mounted in place on the landscape picture. Once complete, this montage will be copied – again onto black and white film – to provide a master negative from which all subsequent prints can be made.

It is from such a master negative that the final print will be produced. If it is to be coloured, I begin by bleaching and sepia toning the print. Water-colour dyes are then applied by cotton-wool swab and brush to add additional colour. Usually, I again copy the picture, but on this occasion onto colour transparency material to produce a slide.

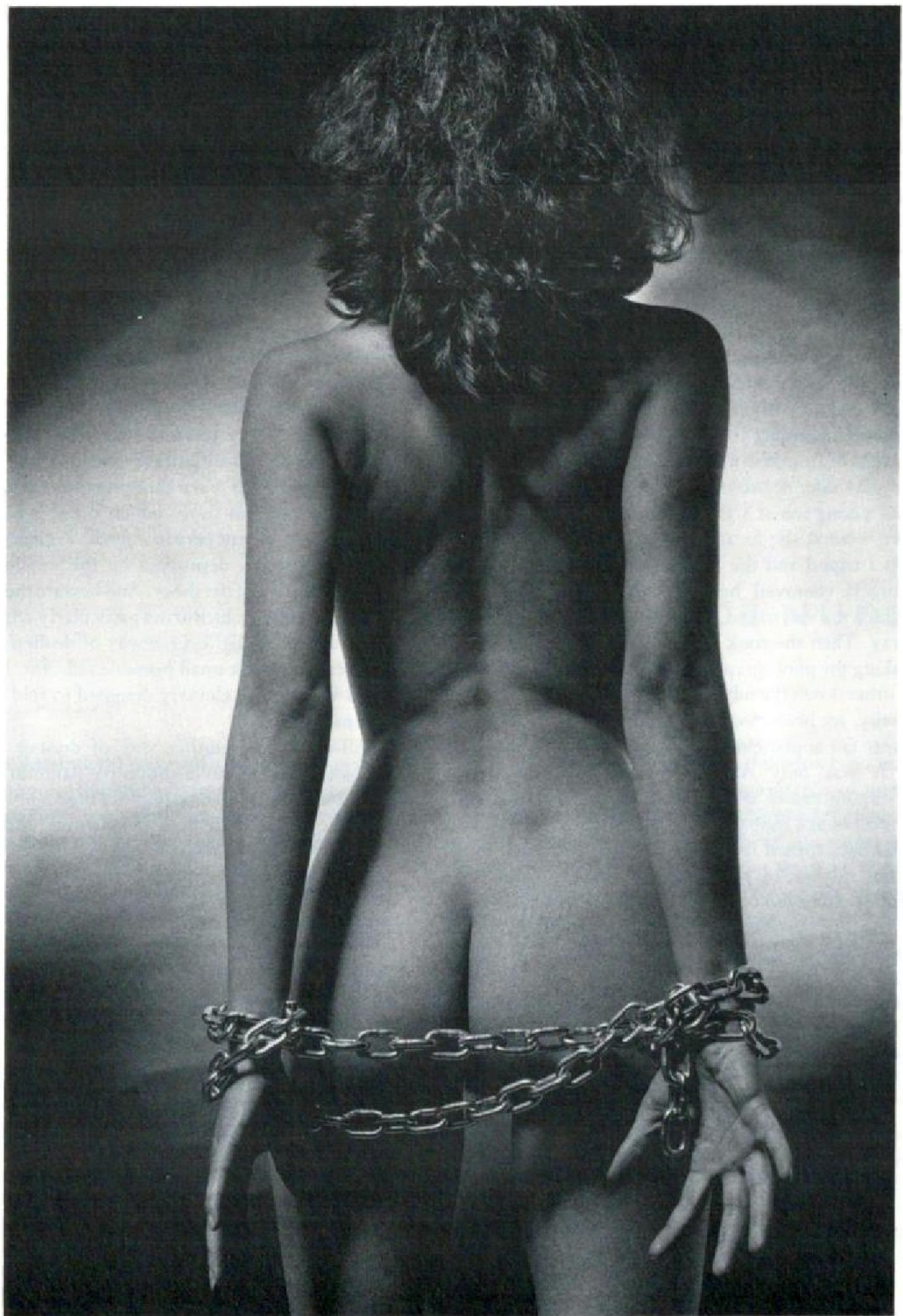
An interesting alternative to the nude in landscape theme can be found in photographing the nude in urban settings. The problem of trying to achieve 'natural' results is avoided because the effect is not intended to be natural – this is precisely what can make such pictures interesting. Nudes incorporated in a rural landscape may harmonise, whereas the urban nude succeeds by its obvious discord.

Finding suitable locations for outdoor nudes can be a problem. As explained, rural settings do not always blend naturally with the nude. Beaches, however, are much more successful, though the idea is by no means new.

There are two alternatives to seeking locations. First, use a rural setting, but focus on a relatively small area of the landscape to create an impression of the surroundings, rather than risk an unacceptable conflict of interests. You might know someone who has a large secluded garden which is suitable. Or shoot outdoor nudes by the sea, on a beach. This will mostly have to be done either very early in the morning or late at night, to avoid problems with onlookers. Alternatively, if the model is brave and hardy, the pictures could be shot during the winter, when few people are on the beach.

Shooting outdoor nudes, particularly in urban

Bound or breaking free? David Chamberlain, 1988. The use of chains as a prop worried the photographer, but was needed to complete an image which gains much of its strength from its own ambivalence.



scenes, does create special problems. The biggest drawback is being surrounded and watched by on-lookers. If you are unlucky you might attract a crowd up to 200 strong, and a policeman wondering why you are causing a breach of the peace. No matter how carefully you select a supposedly quiet location, it can quickly fill with people, particularly once the word spreads that there's a naked model to be stared at. Even in the depths of the countryside, people seem to appear unexpectedly, almost as if from nowhere.

The best advice is to choose the location carefully, plan the session during the winter months, and arrive very early or very late. But even that can't guarantee success. Intending to take some outdoor nude photographs of Angela in a subway near our home, I decided to play safe. A babysitter was engaged to look after our young son at 5.30 one Sunday morning. By 6am we were at the location, with the camera mounted on a tripod and the exposure meter readings taken. Angela removed her one-piece jump suit, under which she was naked, and left it at one end of the subway. Then she took up her position and we started taking the photographs. After a short time, we moved further down the subway, towards the other end. Suddenly, we heard footsteps approaching. Some people were fast approaching through the subway entrance.

It was only Angela's previously undiscovered sprinting ability which saved a great deal of embarrassment as a husband and wife, and their two young children, turned the corner. Angela fled back to her jump suit leaving me, looking extremely guilty, with tripod-mounted camera and nothing to photograph!

Another problem is that of the weather. Outdoor nude photographs are totally dependent on weather and lighting conditions. And few models are willing to work in the rain or snow, no matter how effective the pictures might be. Apart from listening to the weather forecasts, there is little else you can do to avoid being caught on a bad day.

No matter how much you plan, things will go wrong. Yet planning is essential if there is to be any hope of success, with an equipment check-list being

crucial at this stage. Start by going through the camera equipment. Ensure every piece of equipment is working properly and that the batteries are functioning. Check that you have all the lenses and filters which might be needed during the session, and that you have sufficient film. There is nothing worse than running out before a shoot is complete, especially if you are working some distance from shops or when they are all closed.

Also pay particular attention to non-photographic equipment, such as props and make-up, etc, since this is easily overlooked. It is essential to think about every possible requirement – once you are at the location, it will probably be too late and too far to return to collect that one all-important item.

Other problems when shooting nudes outdoors are much the same as those which occur when taking photographs of any person outside. Lighting will, of course, be totally dependent on the weather conditions on the day of the shoot. And beware the problem of high contrast, which arises particularly when shooting in bright sunlight. One way of dealing with this problem is to use a small portable reflector. Manufactured varieties are cleverly designed to fold up into a compact space.

Fill-in flash is another way of dealing with this problem. Any camera-mounted flashgun may be used, but the automatic computer type is preferable. It makes exposure and flash calculations virtually unnecessary. Many of today's sophisticated cameras can meter flash exposure through the lens, and with the correct and compatible flashgun, provide automatic fill-in flash exposures.

Note, however, that photographing nudes needn't happen exclusively during the daylight hours. Nude studies can also be taken at night, using street or even shop window lights for illumination, provided you and your model are bold enough!

Flash too can be used at night to light the model. It won't be particularly natural, but then neither is the setting! If you have an idea for a picture using this technique, it could be worth a try.

THE MALE NUDE

People, particularly some men, are very uncertain how to react to photographs of male nudes. They are used to females being regarded as an image of beauty, in all the arts, but feel uneasy and embarrassed when they see a man portrayed in this way. People are not yet used to looking so intensely at the naked male.

Fortunately, such attitudes are gradually relaxing and recently there has been a trend towards slightly greater acceptance of the male nude in photography. Consequently we are now beginning to see an increase in the number of male nude photographs published in photographic magazines and books. Also, some publishers of posters and greetings cards have begun turning to photographs of the male nude. If this trend continues people might in time be able to look at images of naked men without embarrassment and surprise, and appreciate that the male body can be as beautiful as a woman's. It is certainly as rewarding to photograph.

I must confess that when I began this book I was not looking forward to taking the photographs of male nudes. I had never even given much consideration to the male form. But through working on this book, I have been compelled to study the work of other photographers who have tackled this subject. Quite frankly, I am surprised to find that so little has been done, and that the photographs that do exist are so similar. It seems to me that when dealing with the nude male most photographers leave behind their own intellect and imagination and merely mimic the work of the classic sculptors and artists.

The second popular approach to the male nude concentrates on the 'beefcake' image. Body builders have discovered a gainful part-time employment flexing their freshly developed muscles and posing for photographers' cameras. A fine body may, to some, be a work of art and to others – such as myself – a long-forgotten ambition. But endless photographs of

muscular young men, with or without oiled flesh, does eventually become a little tiresome.

Now I appreciate that there are certain problems specifically related to photographing the male nude, but they are not an excuse for such clichéd photographs. Is there a valid reason why, for instance, society disapproves of photographs of the erect male penis? Why should such an essential part of our sexuality be considered obscene or in bad taste?

When I began photographing male nudes I did not know quite how or where to start. Eventually, I decided to try to forget everything which has gone before and concentrated on my own ideas. In effect, this meant examining my entire philosophy and approach to nude photography. Initially, I analysed my photography of the nude female, wondering whether to apply this approach to the male nude. Although the two subjects are obviously very different, each requiring its own approach, this was my starting point.

Unfortunately, I am a very long way from being able to pass on any real knowledge on this aspect of nude photography. It is still very new to me. However, the small amount of experience which I have so far gained has taught me one valuable lesson. It is a fascinating subject, deserving far more attention. Certainly it is quite difficult, yet at the same time it is extremely rewarding and essential if you are to extend your creative and artistic abilities.

There is still, I am sure, a place for the classical style of male nude, but a picture does not have to imitate this style to become a classic of the future. In any event, the approach has been so widely used that you are up against it right from the start – the competition is very fierce and you will have to be very good to beat it.

Not only does a more modern approach avoid such comparisons, but it also yields a greater freedom of approach to the subject. We can, if we choose, portray man more as he is really thought of. Such stark realism has become a hallmark of the better contemporary photographers of the male nude. They are not concerned with an idealised version of the classical body

– finely muscled with a narrow waist and powerful shoulders and athletic thighs – but with a more typical, less developed version.

Finding suitable and, above all, willing models for male nude studies is not as difficult as many might think. In fact it seems that men are keener to participate than women. Surprisingly, the muscular body-builders are often the most unwilling – even bashful – when asked to pose in the nude. Instead, men with more ordinary, less well developed bodies are far keener to become involved. My own explanation for this is that body builders, almost without exception, are shy, even insecure. I am sure that many turn to body building as a means of developing what they consider to be a strong, masculine, perhaps even aggressive appearance, to disguise their own lack of confidence. On the other hand the man who is relatively unconcerned about his shape or appearance is already confident. He has no need to create an image for himself.

There is very little information of a technical nature to pass on which has not already been covered in other sections of this book. Most lighting techniques are equally applicable to the male nude – the notion that only dramatic and heavily shadowed lighting is suitable is misguided. The subject may be lit in any way to realise the idea for a picture. Much the same can be said for settings. There is no need to conform to the male macho image – the movies do this well enough for us already!

Props can be as equally effective in nude male photography as with females. It is not necessary, or in any way obligatory, to rely on props which are associated specifically with men. A wide range of items can be used, even those which are more often associated with women. Poses, also, do not have to reflect the stereotypical male image. It is foolish to start making rules, or to work under the limiting influence of what some people consider to be masculine. Venture into the field with an open mind and you are more likely to produce quite startling results, opening up more new avenues for ideas which in turn might stimulate previously unexplored themes.

COLOUR FOLIO

Colour photography has never held great interest for me particularly when photographing the nude. The problem is, I think, that colour is either an unsuccessful attempt to imitate reality or when manipulated for colour's sake, rather garish. Perhaps that is why the vast majority of better-known photographers of the nude tackle the subject almost exclusively in black and white. Rarely have I seen any 'memorable' photographs of the nude in colour. Tinting, however, is another matter.

I certainly accept that there is sometimes a justification for using colour, but only when colour is aesthetically essential. Not being a commercial 'photographer', I am not too fussy about how the colour is introduced. I will use any means necessary to create the required effect. Only occasionally does this demand the use of 'straight' colour photography, and even then, there is often some sort of manipulation involved in making the final image.

Quite frankly, like many other photographers, I have never been prepared to accept colour as determined by an individual film manufacturer. With virtually all my photography I like to exercise complete control over the final image. This applies just as strongly when I use colour.

Although I do sometimes take advantage of specific characteristics of individual brands of colour films, each one being in some way quite different from the others, this still offers only very limited control, and it is only possible to take advantage of such characteristics when they can be pre-visualised and applied to a clear-cut and very specific idea.

More often than not it is necessary for me to introduce my own colour in order to achieve the effect I want. To this end I nearly always start my colour pictures by shooting in black and white. I then make a monochrome print (usually several), so gaining an opportunity to develop gradually the final colour

rendition, forcing it towards the exact effect. Having several prints available also provides room for experimentation and a safety margin for wastage through error.

The application of colour to black and white prints almost always starts by bleaching and sepia toning the print. Sometimes this may be the entire print, sometimes only a specific area. The skin tones of my nude pictures are usually only partially bleached and lightly sepia toned.

The print is then washed for a short period before the application of gold toner. I always gold tone the model's skin, but not necessarily the entire picture. The application of gold toner to a previously sepia-toned print produces a colour shift from sepia through light peach, pink and orange or reddish tones, depending on the depth of the original sepia toning and the degree of gold toning. Once this stage is satisfactorily completed, the print is thoroughly washed.

If any additional colour needs to be applied, I use water-colour dyes. The colours can be diluted and applied to the print with cotton-wool swabs and good quality brushes. Rather than attempt to apply the desired colour in one single application, I find it is preferable, and certainly more controllable, to build up the colour through several applications of diluted dye. After each application I dab the print dry with clean cotton-wool before applying the next. In this way, it is easy gradually to strengthen or modify a colour as the work progresses.

Trial and error has proved to me that for two reasons it is preferable to work with prints made on resin-coated printing papers. First, this type of paper greatly reduces the washing times required between the toning stages. Second, and more importantly, it enables me to develop my own method of working, which is deliberately to over-colour the print so that the tones are correct but slightly too dense. It is then possible to wash the print, so removing some of the water-colour dye and reducing the overall colour density. This washing away of the colour can be

stopped at any time, as soon as the desired density is obtained, by removing the print from the water and drying with a squeegee.

For some of my pictures I combine hand-colouring techniques with other techniques, such as montage or hand drawing. However, an essential stage for all such colour pictures is to copy them onto colour reversal film to produce a transparency. The reason for this is simple. The original hand-coloured picture is unique and unrepeatable. A colour transparency of this original will enable me to make prints whenever I wish, incorporating all the hand work.

Copying also provides an additional stage at which extra control or modification can be carried out. It is quite simple to make further alterations to the overall colour, and to make the picture either warmer or cooler by using filters placed over the camera lens when the original is copied.

It may seem strange that I do not relate such pictures to normal colour photography in any way, but they really are unrelated. I view them almost in the same way as my monochrome images and, in effect, they are an extension of black and white work.

It is difficult to describe precisely how specific colours are chosen for these pictures. Mostly, I find it is a matter of feel. Quite honestly, I am hopeless when it comes to colour selection. If somebody was to ask me how I select my colours for such pictures I probably wouldn't have a clue!

Although I can see within my mind how the finished picture must be, it is a somewhat difficult and arduous task to achieve the desired end result. Often, I will discard several failed attempts before achieving my goal.

When working on any picture, black and white or hand-coloured, I find myself drawn into the picture, becoming almost a part of it. I don't really know whether I enjoy this experience, but it is necessary and unavoidable.

David Chamberlain

PLATE 1

I don't like to overload my photographs with props and will only use those which are necessary or essential. The barbed wire for this shot was genuine, much to Angela's dismay and discomfort. It was spray-painted white specially for the picture.

The idea was totally preplanned, even down to the final colour rendition although the picture was initially taken on black and white film. A canvas background was lit by two small studio flash units while Angela was lit by a further, more powerful unit, fitted with a white brolly to act as a diffuser.

The original monochrome print was lightly bleached and sepia toned, followed by selective gold toning to the skin tones. The background was hand coloured, using water-colour dye, applied with cotton-wool swabs while the smaller details were coloured with the same sort of dyes, but using brushes for greater accuracy.

PLATE 2

'Angela – In Fancy Dress'

Hand colouring black and white prints enables me to control the final colour effect. The highly monochromatic rendering of this picture would be almost impossible to produce with conventional colour photography. All the props for this shot were carefully selected to permit my own taste in colour to be exercised. The blonde wig is a cheap novelty item purchased from a theatrical shop.

The main light, a studio flash unit fitted with a white diffusion brolly, was positioned quite high and slightly to one side of the model. The background was lit by two similar but less powerful units. No fill-in light was necessary as I required quite heavy modelling to emphasise the shape of the buttocks.

Shot on black and white, the original monochrome print was lightly bleached and sepia toned before being gold toned to warm the overall colouring even more. No additional hand colouring was required, only slight additional selective gold toning to the hair.

PLATE 3

A simple graphic colour picture. A black and white original was first bleached and sepia toned. The entire print was next covered with Frisk transparent masking film, which is a very thin clear plastic film with a self-adhesive backing. The area of the french knickers was then carefully cut out, using a sharp scalpel, and removed. Gold toner was applied to the exposed area of the print until a pink/peach colour was obtained. After the masking film was removed and the print thoroughly washed, a little additional colour was applied to the model's finger-nails, using water-colour dyes.

PLATE 4

A selectively toned and tinted black and white print. The original was shot using uprated Ilford HP5 film at EI 1600 for a grainy result.

The picture is not a montage. An empty picture frame was used and has been lit to provide shadow on the model, helping to provide a little depth between the frame and the model.

A black and white print was masked, using Frisk masking film, and the area within the frame was cut out from the masking film with a scalpel and removed. This was then bleached and sepia toned. The masking film was removed and, after washing, the area of the frame itself was tinted using water-colour dye.

PLATE 5

A pre-planned picture (which I very much enjoy looking at), all the props having been purchased specially for the idea. The original photograph was taken in black and white, to enable me to colour the picture to my own requirements. The first stage was to bleach lightly and sepia tone the print. Following this, it was necessary to dye lightly the white collar blue, so that it would come back to a more neutral tone during the next stage. This involved lightly applying gold tone to the picture, so warming up the skin tones.

All additional colour was applied either by brush or swabs of cotton-wool, using water-colour dyes.

PLATE 6

Monuments is a symbolic image. It was produced by montage, the nude being shot specially for the idea. My anamorphic or 'squeeze' lens was used to create the stretched effect and a red filter has lightened the skin tones to provide a stone-like effect. The landscape element was already an existing print, having been taken one year earlier. Both images were monochrome. In this instance, the montage itself was completed in black and white and copied to produce a master negative from which subsequent prints can be made.

It was such a print that was toned and tinted to provide the final colour rendering. The nude was masked out on the print, using Frisk masking film, and the rest of the image was bleached and sepia toned. After a short rinse, the top of the picture – the sky and the monument – was heavily gold toned, changing the colour to reddish-orange. Next, the mask was removed and the print again briefly washed.

Following this, the print was once again immersed into the bleach. This only affected those tones which had previously been protected by the mask. After another rinse, the print was again sepia toned very lightly, then gold toned just enough to warm the sepia colour of the nude figure slightly. Finally, a little additional colour was applied to the highlights of the monument by using water-colour dyes applied with a small brush.

PLATE 7

This picture makes use of several techniques—black and white photography, toning and tinting, hand drawing, montage and, finally, copying.

The figure was the first part of this construction. Shot in black and white in my studio, the print was very lightly bleached and sepia toned, followed by slight gold toning to warm up the flesh tones. The figure itself was cut out from the print using a sharp scalpel.

Next, the room was lightly sketched out in pencil on a piece of white drawing board, using the figure to assist with scale and dimension, before finally being completed in ink. Apertures were cut out of the drawing board in the areas representing the television screen and the window. However, an area of card was retained within the window area to support the figure when this was mounted onto the card background.

Two further black and white prints of the figure on a beach were made, which were tinted using dyes. When dry, each was mounted in its respective position 'behind' the drawing board, so that from the front they were revealed through the apertures previously cut out.

The final stage in making this image was to copy the montage using two studio flash units at 45 degrees to the work. One was set on full power, the other on half power. This has produced a slight shadow behind the figure and down the left side of the window, due to the thickness of the card providing depth between the top surface and the background print mounted on the reverse side. This creates an impression of glass in the window.

PLATE 8

Grrrh! was made through a combination of photography and artwork. The picture was inspired by childhood fears, when it was believed that nasty creatures were lurking in the loo, ready to rear up without warning to bite one's bum!

The toilet pan was the first step to creating this image and was photographed in black and white. A large print was made, from which a hole was cut, representing the water-line. A second black and white photograph was taken, this time of Angela's bottom – from a suitable position of course! The image of the buttocks was coloured by air-brushing, then cut out from the black and white print.

The fearsome jaws were created by air-brush painting on a separate sheet of art paper and cut out, leaving a small area of white paper around the image. This artwork was then mounted onto a sheet of cardboard, marked out and coloured in a chequer-board pattern of black and white squares. The monochrome print of the toilet pan was cut to shape and mounted onto the artwork so that the open jaws were aligned with the hole cut out in the middle of the toilet pan. Finally, the airbrushed cut-out print of the buttocks was mounted into position and the resulting montage copied onto colour reversal film.

PLATE 9

This is quite a complicated picture requiring several different stages in its construction. The first step was a straight colour photograph of Angela in white clothing, shot on colour reversal film. The second step, also a straight colour photograph, was a picture of Angela in a similar pose but naked. The third stage was to take yet another similar picture, only this time with Angela wearing red briefs.

Next, a jigsaw puzzle was bought, assembled and glued in position on a card backing. This was then spray-painted matt white and copied onto colour reversal film.

The transparency of the white jigsaw puzzle pattern and that of Angela in the white clothing were then sandwiched together to make a single large colour print. Sections of the jigsaw puzzle were carefully cut out from the print using a sharp scalpel.

Next, colour prints were made of the nude picture and the one including the red briefs. These were enlarged to match the proportions of the clothed jigsaw picture, and the image of the briefs was cut out as a separate element. This enabled me to position them on the nude picture in precisely the position I required. The final part of assembly was to mount the clothed jigsaw picture over the nude with previously positioned briefs, so that parts of the figure were revealed through the missing jigsaw cut-outs.

Finally, the background behind the model was hand coloured, using art pencil brushes which are water-colour based, and the montage was copied onto colour reversal film.

PLATE 10

I have a preference for warm colours. This picture, in particular, is very warm indeed.

I think the shape of a young woman during early pregnancy is very beautiful, but this shape is changing all the time, probably more quickly than is realised. This caused a certain amount of panic in trying to get this shot. In fact, my first attempts were a failure and I had to reshoot the picture a couple of times before I got it right.

Taken originally in black and white in my studio, against a plain white wall while using direct flash diffused through a white brolly, the light is quite soft. A second light, fitted with a black honeycomb attachment, was used to direct extra light onto the hair.

The original monochrome print was lightly bleached and sepia toned very briefly. This was followed by selectively gold toning the skin colour and the hair, using toner applied directly, by brush. Next, the garment which Angela is wearing was hand coloured with water-colour dye. So too were her lips and eyes. The print was then washed to reduce the density of dye colour and some additional yellow dye was applied to the background. To warm the image still further, it was immersed completely into a bath of gold toner. This further enhanced the warmth of the background, the tone coming-up through the yellow dye without affecting the skin tones, which had already reached their maximum density.

PLATE 11

This picture results from a single nude image. It has been printed to different densities in black and white and then toned in progressive shades using a combination of bleaching and gold toning, bleaching followed by partial sepia toning and subsequent gold toning, and more heavy bleaching, sepia toning and gold toning.

The original was shot against a black background, and the individual prints were trimmed down one side of the figure to remove the background on this side. Each has then been mounted, overlapping and one above the other, separated by a further thickness of cardboard, so building up a picture with real depth.

This was then copied onto colour reversal material, using only one studio light directed from the side, to cast a shadow between each of the figures.

PLATE 12

A very simple composition, which in fact proved quite difficult to accomplish. With little regard to Angela's safety, electronic studio flash was used to provide the required level of illumination. One single flash unit was positioned just outside the bathroom door.

The picture was shot initially on black and white film and the resulting monochrome print was toned and tinted. First the entire print was masked using Frisk masking film. The masking film was cut out around the area of the leg, using a scalpel, and removed. This part of the picture was then partially bleached, lightly sepia toned and washed. Before the masking film was removed, the same area was gold toned until the desired skin tone was achieved. With the mask removed, the print was once again washed.

Next, the print was immersed into the bleach, but for an extremely brief period. This was followed by equally brief sepia toning. After a further short wash, the picture was gold toned until the white bath just took on a warm tone. Following yet another short rinse, the foam in the bath was selectively gold toned, using toner applied by brush. Finally, additional colour was applied to the wall tiles, using water-colour dye.

PLATES 13 & 14

Colour transparency films of different manufacture each have their own particular characteristics. By selecting film specifically for a particular picture you can guarantee the desired result.

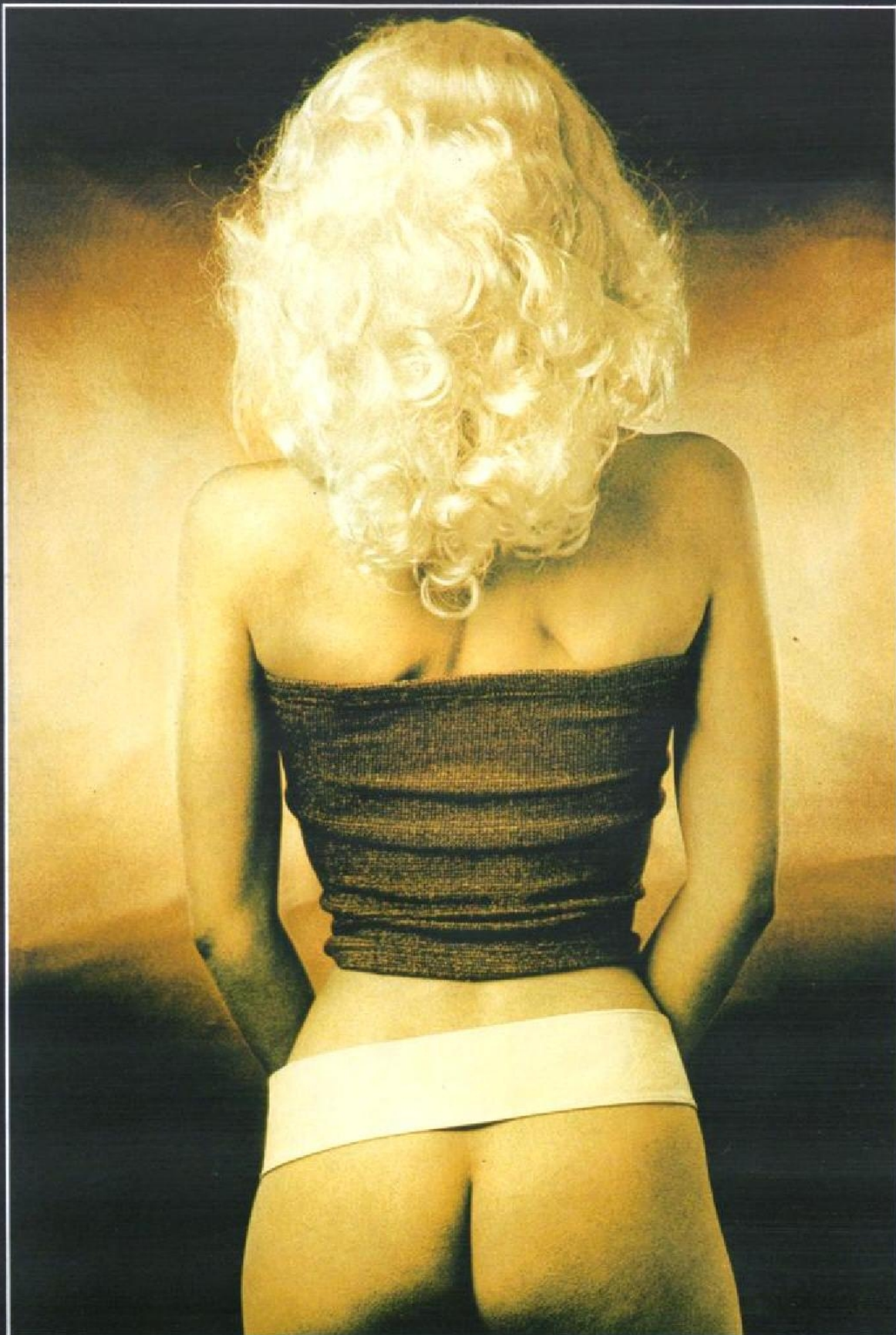
These two shots were produced using Kodak P800/1600 film, shot by tungsten light, to achieve a warmer colour rendering.

PLATE 15

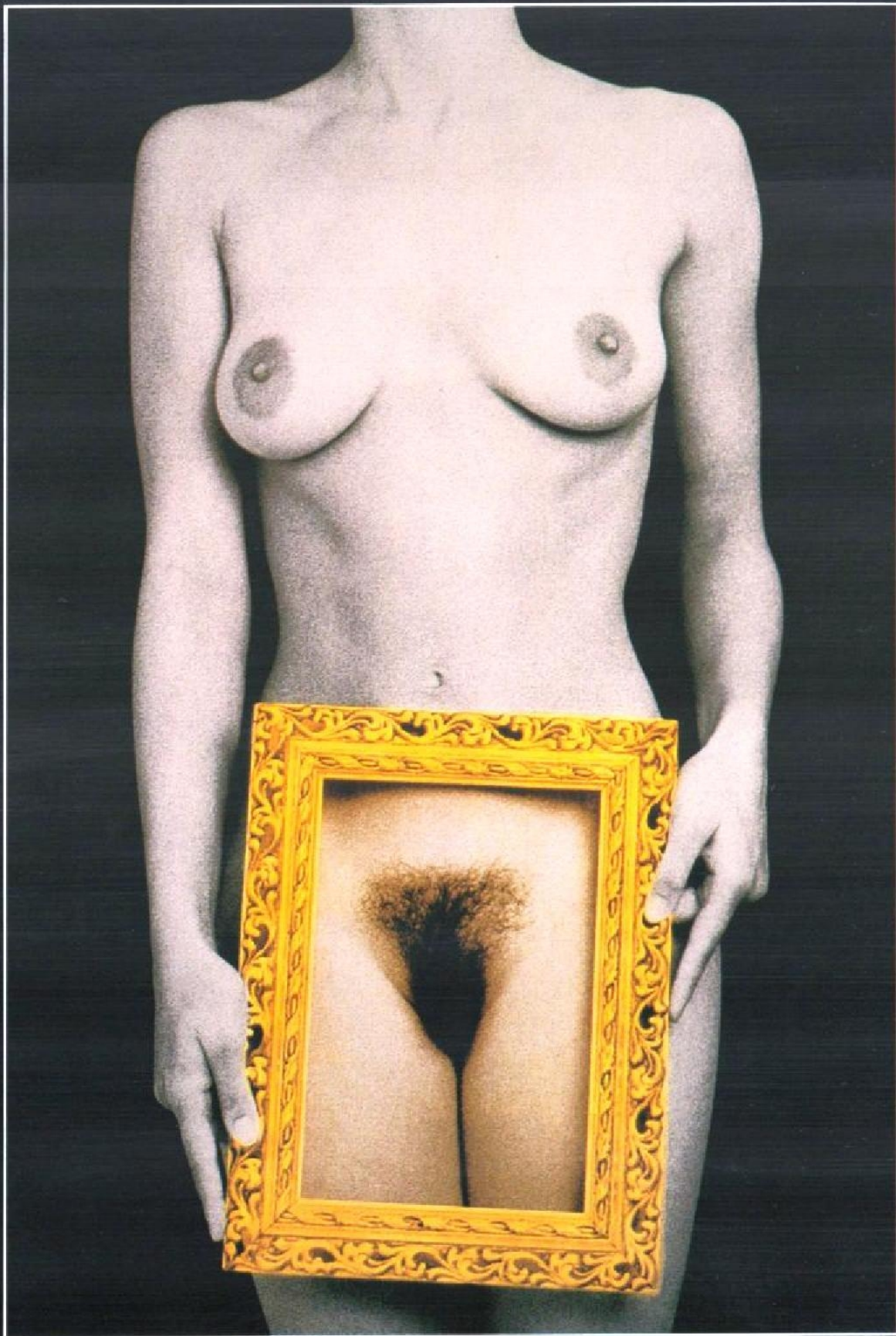
Hand colouring black and white prints makes it possible to do things which simply could not be done when using straight colour photography. The additional stage of making a black and white print permits additional, and almost total, control over the tonal structure of a picture.

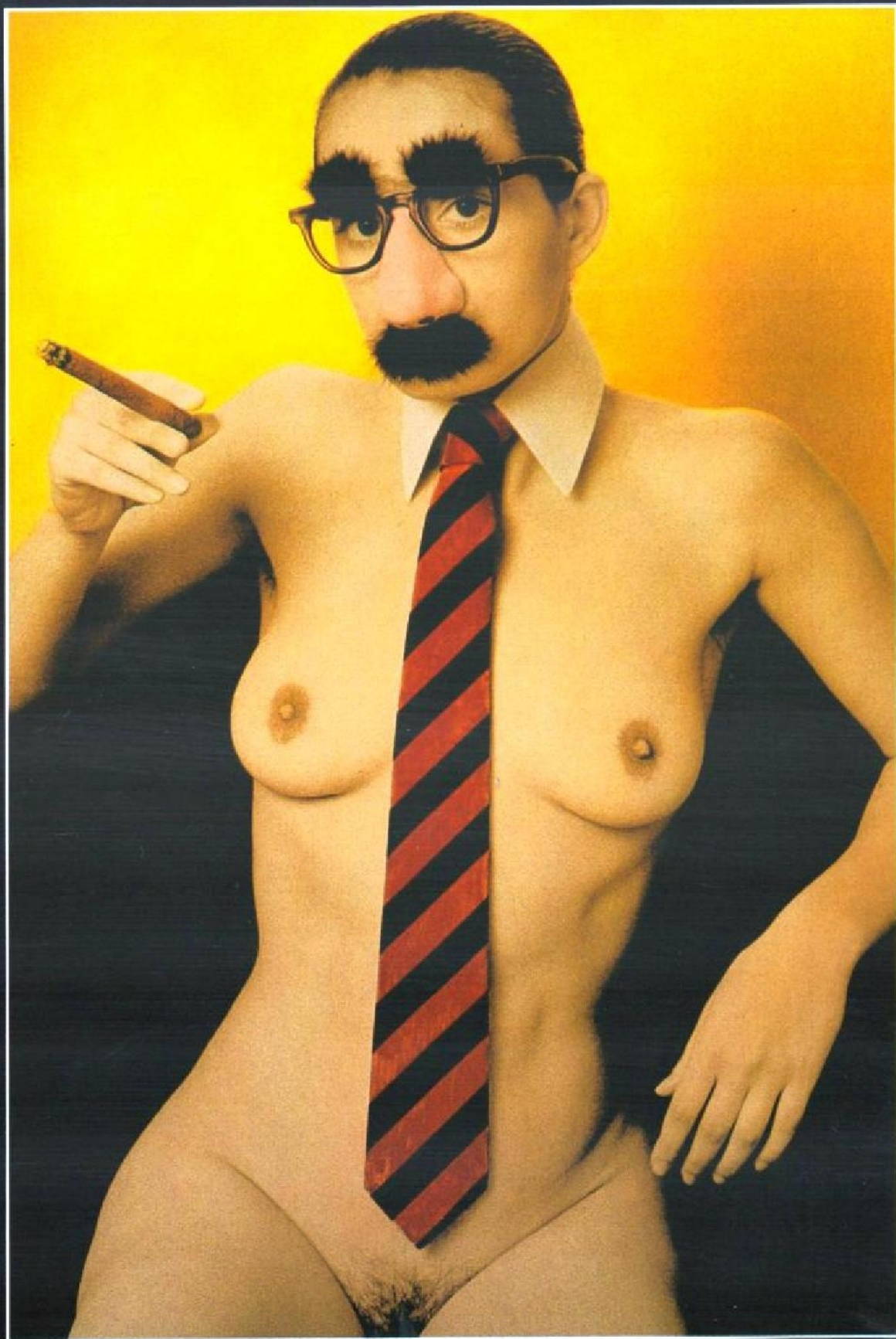
After initial bleaching and sepia toning, the black and white print was quite heavily gold toned. At the washing stage, additional colour was applied to the skin tones – which in this case remained slightly too light – the model's eyes, lips and the background, using water-colour dyes. The print was somewhat over-coloured and then washed, until the required depth of colour was achieved. Finally, the print was copied onto colour reversal film, using studio flash and an 81B warm-up filter over the camera lens.

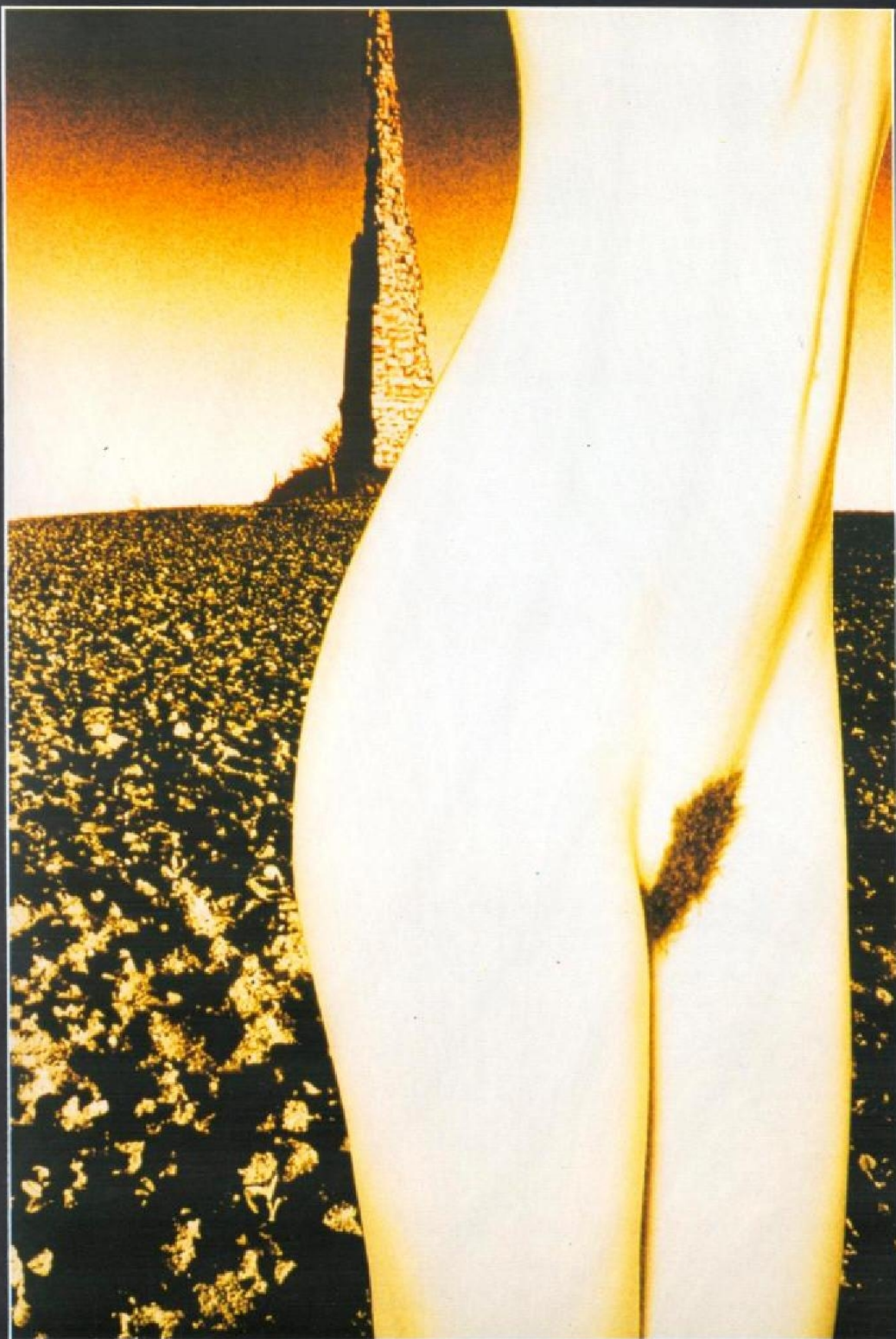










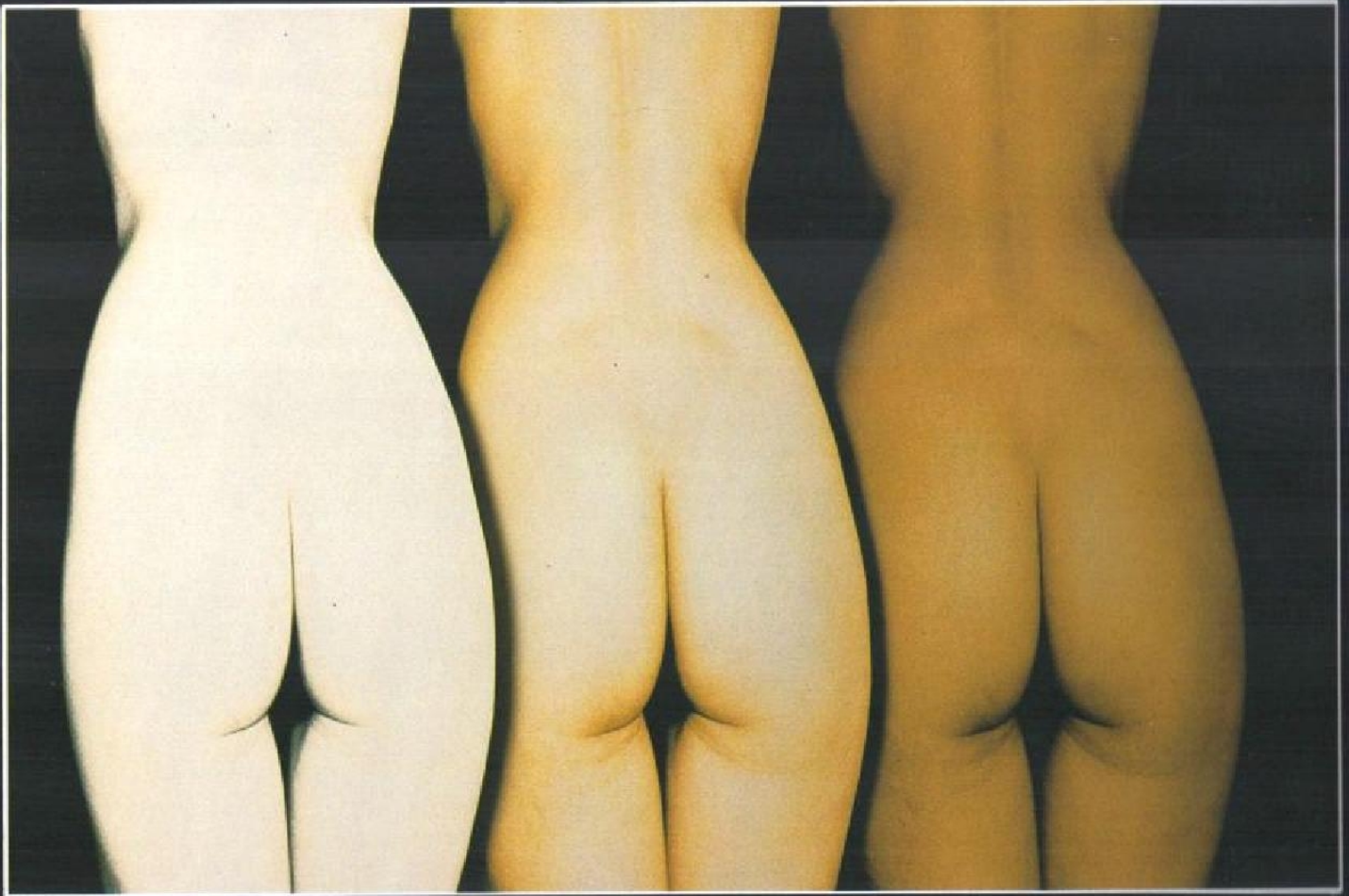




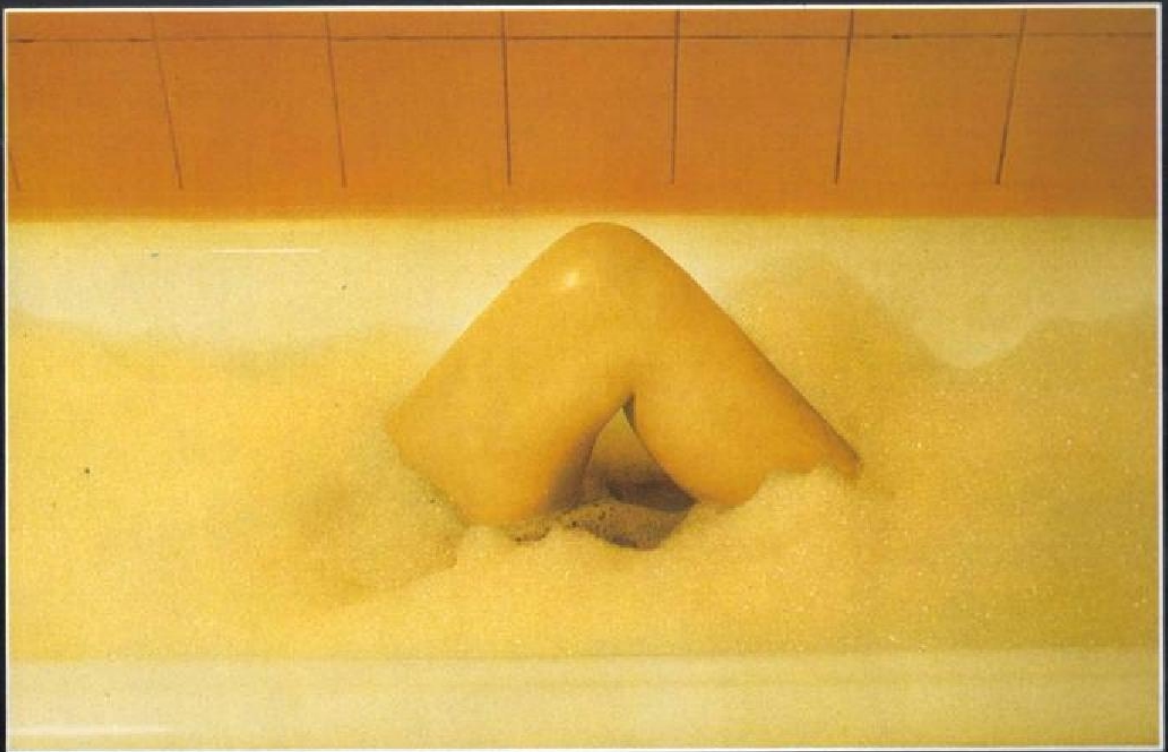






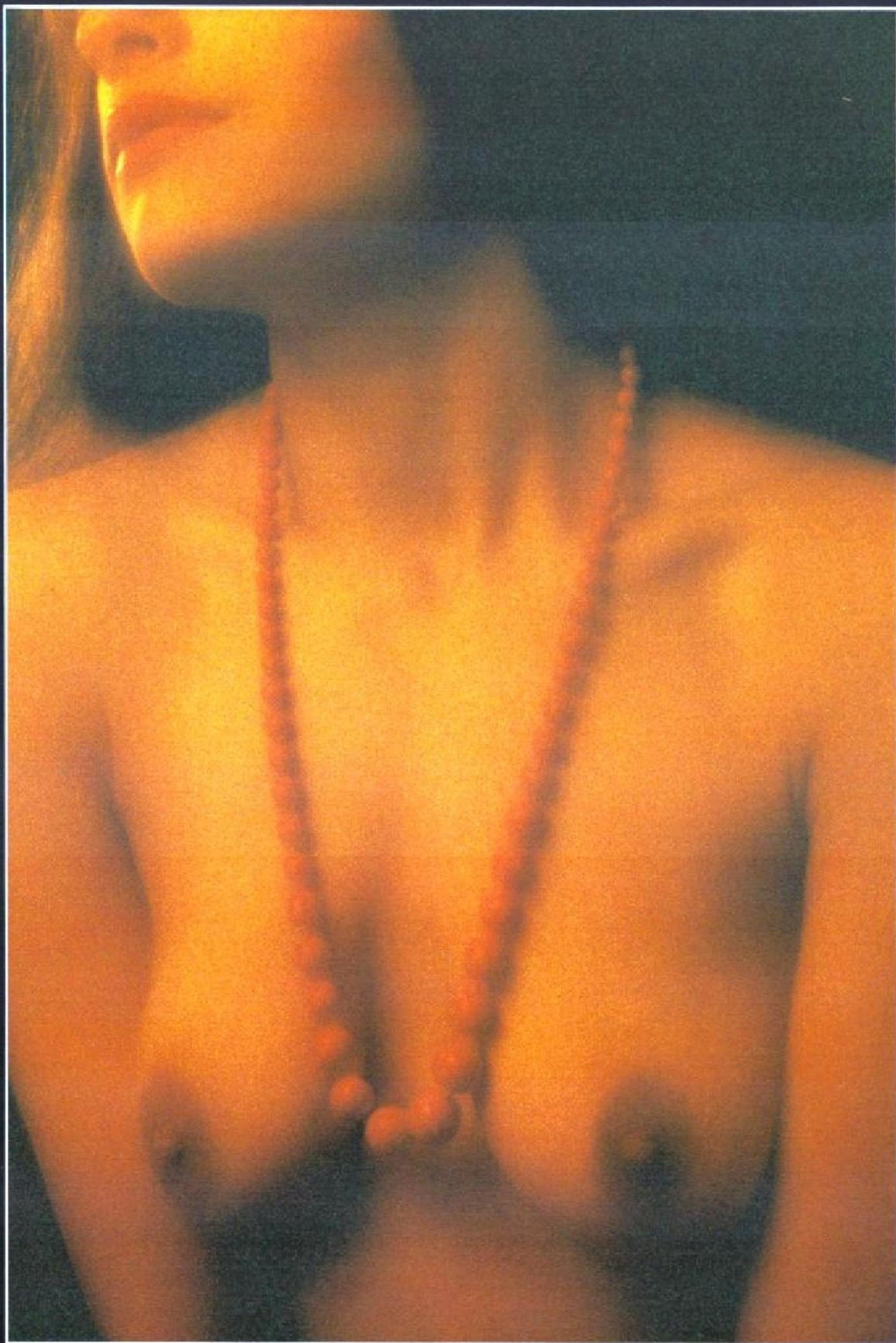


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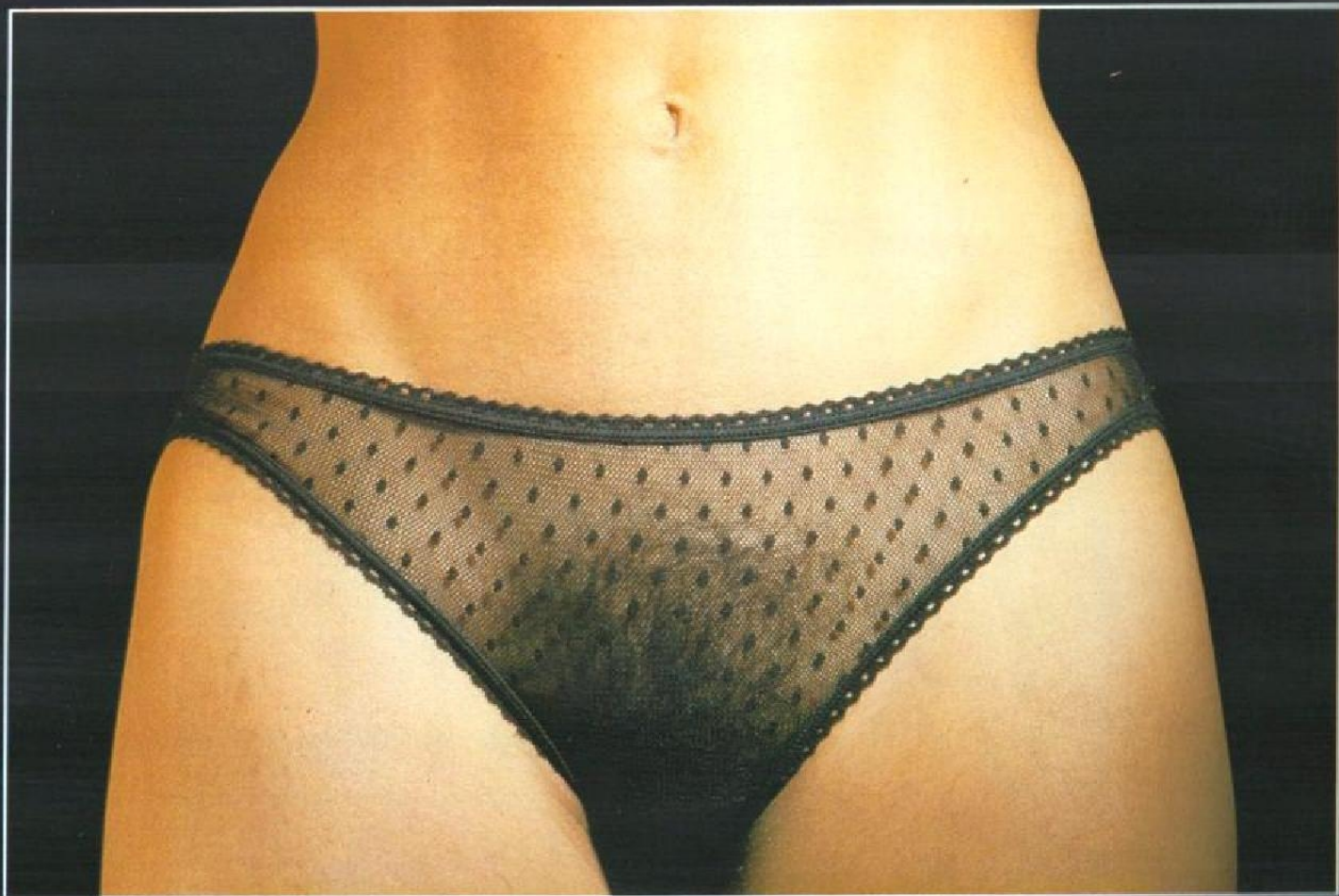


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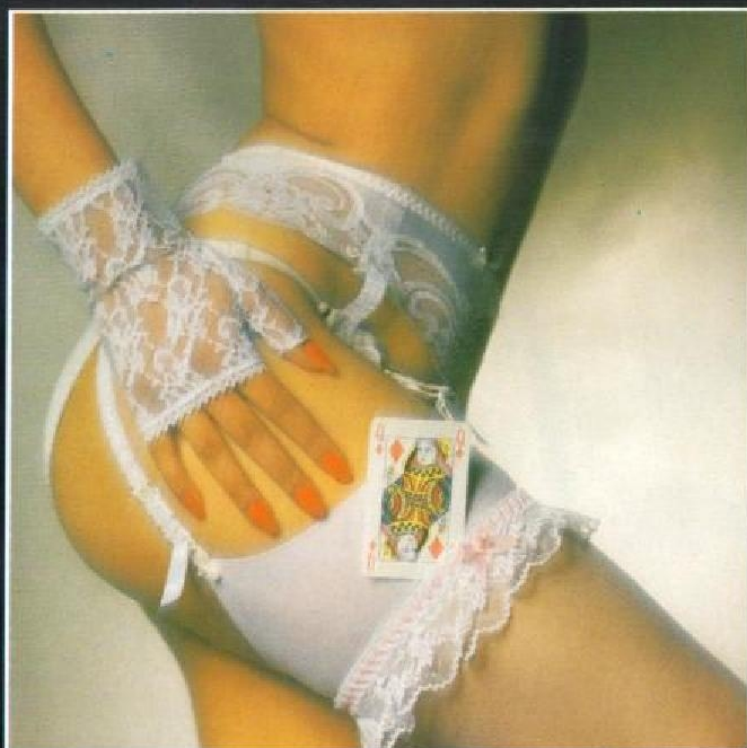








16



17



PLATE 16

A rare instance for me—a picture idea requiring the use of straight colour photography. In such a case I always use colour reversal film for a transparency, never colour negative.

The subject was lit very simply, with just one light positioned almost directly in front of the model. To produce warm skin tones, I used only the modelling lamp of my studio flash unit, not the flash itself. A normal exposure on colour film, balanced for daylight, has created very warm tones, because of the incorrect balance of the tungsten light source.

PLATE 17

Hot Shot is not truly a nude picture, and is a bit too near 'glamour' for my liking, but is nevertheless an amusing picture. This idea started out as a nude wearing only white stockings. However, as the idea progressed, so other garments became necessary.

One of my rare medium format images, taken on a Pentax 6 × 7 camera. The image was later cropped to a square format purely for compositional reasons.

PLATE 18

An image made by straight colour photography, although the result is rather unusual. The subject has been deliberately photographed out of focus.

This has given the image a very attractive, strange quality. The brightly lit white background 'eats' into the defocused figure, creating a wasting, almost fluid appearance, which is well suited to the nude female figure.

MONOCHROME FOLIO

The photographs which are reproduced in this section do not represent a particularly large part of my life, but certainly the most important and personally satisfying part of it. For me, photography is not about 'photography' at all: it is about pictures. Not about the camera but about the result. And pictures are my life.

Photography itself is only a means to an end. Where once I would use charcoal, soft pencils and sometimes paint to produce pictures I now use the camera. I hope that you will too.

All of the pictures of the female nude in this section, are of Angela. It is a conscious decision. During the creation of this book I organised a number of different sessions with a variety of models, but it has only been when working with Angela that I have gradually developed the ability to create pictures which excite and satisfy, and this has influenced my selection. Working together so closely has enabled us both to

develop and improve our ability to produce successful pictures with reasonable regularity. We each understand how the other thinks and feels, which has greatly assisted our work. As I have already said, we each contribute heavily towards the pictures and work hard together at making them successful two-dimensional interpretations of the preconceived idea.

I have never yet been able to obtain the same level of enjoyment from studying another photographer's pictures. Not even from outstanding pictures by the recognised great photographers of the nude.

It is certainly not that I believe my work to be better than that of other photographers, merely that my own pictures are made by me, for me, and in most cases are what I want them to be. They are therefore, the only pictures which I unhesitatingly enjoy, just as your successful pictures are the only ones which, if you are honest, show what you see – or want to see.

This is not as damning as it might sound because

photographers do not produce their pictures to please other people. This is as it should be. Like most others photographers I started producing pictures for my own personal pleasure, and I am still doing so. If others gain pleasure from my work, or your work, then I am pleased but not grateful. I don't expect others to like my work, and I never demand it.

I do, however, have a great appreciation and respect for the work of other photographers, but this is quite a different reaction. I do believe that 'art' of any kind is only fully appreciated by the artist. Others might share in that appreciation, but it will never be as intense as that experienced by the artist.

It is this sort of appreciation which is the most that any photographer can hope to invoke from viewers of the work. If any of my pictures invoke such appreciation I consider this a bonus. For I have already received my rewards, through my own enjoyment of these pictures. That said, it is for none of the above reasons that the following photographs are reproduced. They follow because they are necessary to the objective of this book, which is to encourage others to take up a strong and defined interest in photographing the nude. I hope that in this respect the book is successful. I know from my experiences meeting other photographers at many very different venues where I and they talk about photography and show work, that people are interested in what others are doing and how they achieve the final result. I am already aware that if my photographs of the nude and what I have to say about

my approach to the subject has in some degree provided an initial stimulus for others to become involved in the subject, then I will have succeeded. This, for me, is very satisfying and provides me with additional determination.

Reviews for my first book *The Creative Monochrome Image* were split. Some were outstandingly favourable: others criticised it for attempting to establish a dogma or code of principles by which a picture should be produced. Another reviewer suggested that although the photographs were strong I was too close and involved in my own work to discuss my pictures objectively. Most criticism was directed at the extended captions which accompanied the photographs, describing the *why* rather than the *how* of each picture.

On this occasion I have therefore decided to opt for briefer captions concentrating on how each photograph was produced. I have omitted my own personal feelings about the pictures or indeed why the pictures were made in such a way. This I will leave to you.

It has never been my intention, nor should it be the job of any photographer, to suggest to others how they should take particular pictures. Least of all should people blindly follow the ideas of others. Both the words and the pictures in this book are there to illustrate one particular approach to the subject. We can all of us learn from other people's experience, or at least appreciate what they are trying to do, even if we do not always agree with it.

The vast majority of these photographs were taken with an Olympus OM1n 35mm SLR camera, using Olympus Zuiko lenses.

The lenses I most commonly use for nude photography are: 21mm/f3.5; 28mm/f2.8; 50mm/f1.8; and 100mm/f2.8.

Any deviations from the above equipment are clearly noted in the captions which accompany the relevant photographs.

Although I have used other films in the past, in recent years I have tended to use only Ilford HP5 because of its suitability for nude work. This is invariably developed in Agfa Rodinal developer, diluted 1 to 25.

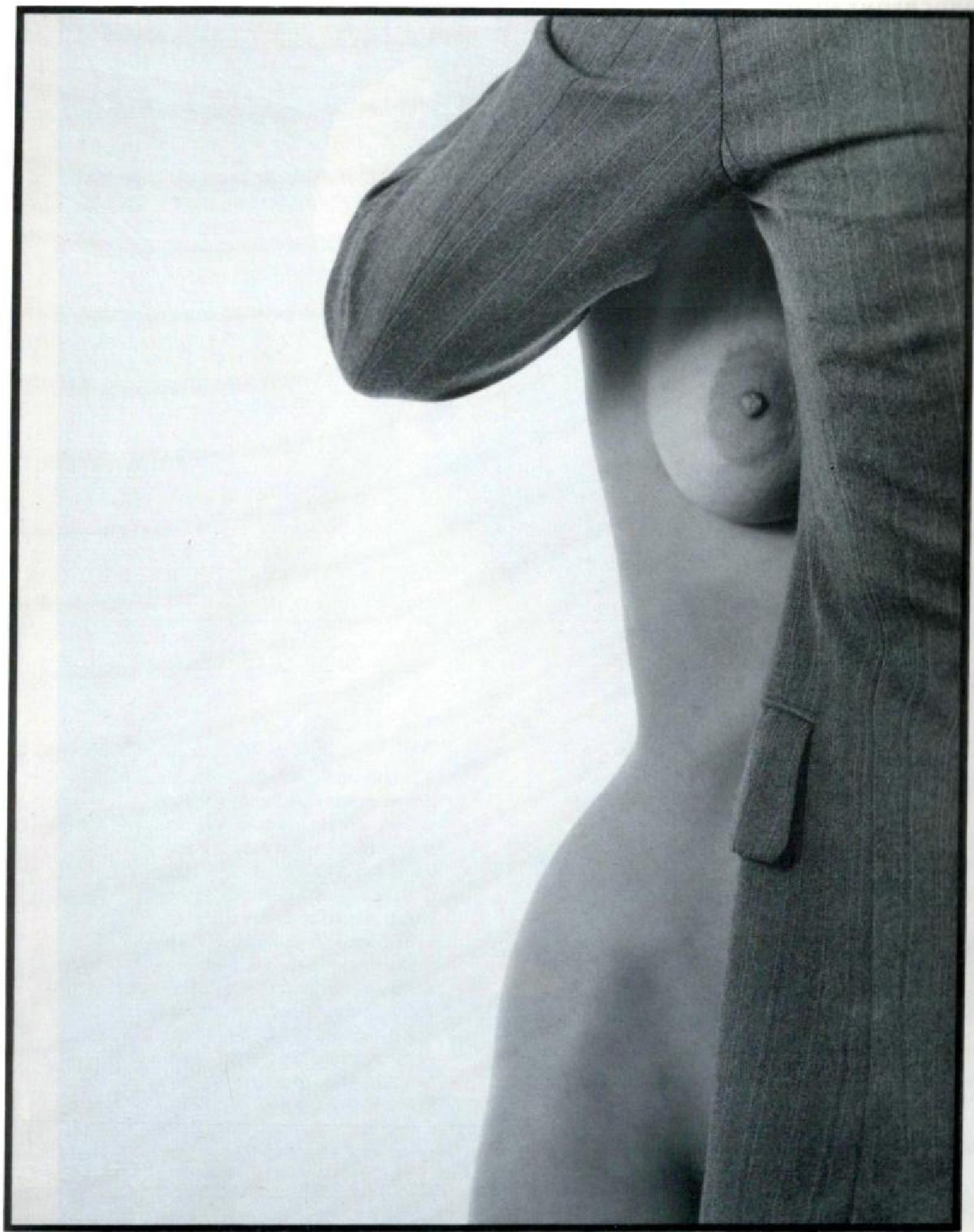


PLATE 1

A simple nude portrait which depends almost entirely on lighting for its success. Angela has quite long hair and after washing it she usually wraps a towel around her head. That image was the inspiration for this photograph, which was taken in my studio.

The studio flash lighting was set up to show clearly the folds and texture of the towel. The main light – direct, but diffused through a white brolly – was directed from slightly to one side of the model and at just above head height. Fill-in, to relieve the shadows, was achieved through the use of a simple reflector – a sheet of white cardboard.



PLATE 2

This photograph was taken in an old and uninhabited cottage, using natural light. The hard shadows are created by direct sunlight coming through a skylight window, almost directly above the model.

A wide-angle lens was used for two reasons. First, to create an impression of perspective, emphasising the model's position trapped in a corner of the room. And second to get all of the subject in – it really was a very small room!





PLATE 3

The human face, stripped bare of superfluous detail and tone – naked – is not often given much consideration in photography of the nude.

The picture was taken in my studio using electronic flash. One unit, fitted with a white umbrella diffuser, was positioned directly in front of the subject, while a second was placed behind the model's hair, producing the small highlights.

A red filter was used over the camera lens to increase contrast and the film was over-developed to further enhance the high contrast effect. This has made it possible to print the skin tones pure white while retaining some half tones in the darker areas of the lips and eyes.



PLATE 4

A supplementary anamorphic or 'squeeze' lens was used, attached in front of a 100mm telephoto lens, to provide horizontal compression of the subject. The picture was taken in my studio, using a single electronic studio flash unit. No fill-in was required.

PLATE 5

A very simple picture, heavily dependent on lighting for its success, especially in providing the distinct separation between the model's legs and buttocks.

The main light for this shot is a reflector (one wall of my studio is painted matt white). Two studio flash units were directed onto this wall to bounce light backwards onto the model. This has provided a soft rim lighting effect.

A third larger and more powerful flash unit was fitted with a white brolly reflector, and directed from near the camera position onto the unlit side of the model. This provided fill-in for the shadows.

A medium speed film was selected (Ilford FP4) which was developed in an Ilford Perceptol developer, diluted 1 to 3, for a slight accutance (edge) effect. This has further helped to enhance the separation between highlights and shadows. (Nikon F3HP camera, 85mm/f2 lens at f11)



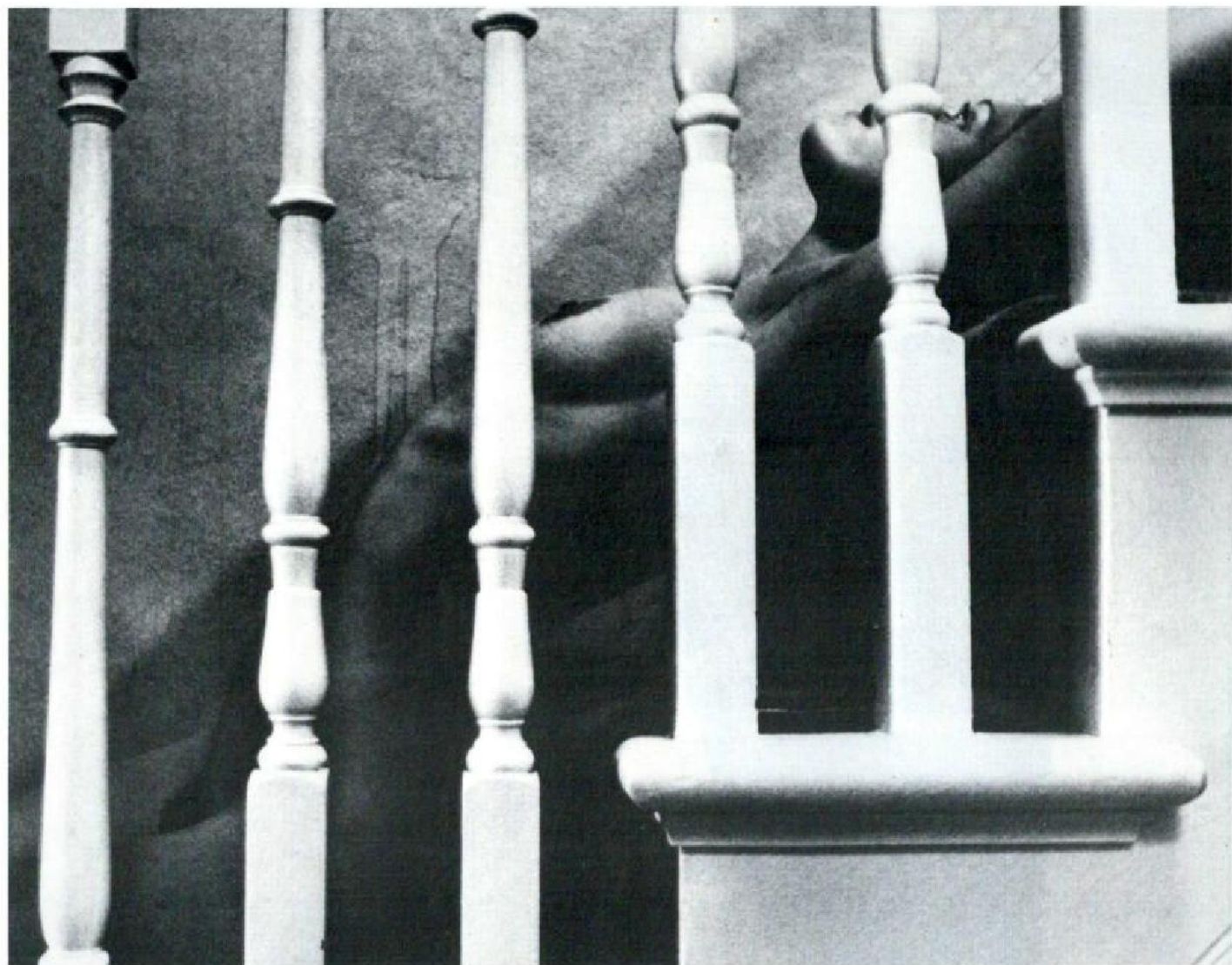


PLATE 6

This photograph was made using available indoor light, coming through a skylight high above the model. The light was quite dim, so in order to obtain satisfactory exposure, the film's speed had to be uprated. Ilford HP5 film was rated at EI 1600 and push processed in Ilford ID-11 developer. (Nikon F3HP camera, 85mm/f2 lens, 1/60th at f5.6)

PLATES 7 & 8

Unfortunately my house does not have real floorboards, which can add starkness to an interior shot. For this pair of photographs, entitled *New Shoes*, I have therefore constructed a small section of boarded flooring. This is very convenient when such a setting is required, and can be kept out of the way when not in use, leaning against a wall of my studio. The skirting board is also fake. It is a short section, fixed to the wall just above the real skirting. The section of flooring slots in underneath this section when required for photography.

These pictures were made in my studio, using electronic flash and an anamorphic 'squeeze' lens attachment, fitted onto the front of a standard 50mm lens. This has produced the 'stretched' appearance to the legs. The vignetting at the top and bottom of the picture is caused by the use of the squeeze lens. It is a characteristic which I like and use quite regularly. The effect can be increased by fitting filter rings, as spacers, between the prime lens and the anamorphic. The effect is less apparent when prime lenses of longer focal length are used. If the vignetting is still required when using a lens of 100mm focal length, for example, several filter ring spacers will be required. In this way, it is possible to control quite precisely how much vignetting is achieved.





PLATE 9

This is not an original idea. Just about everybody who photographs the nude form has had a go at something like it. However, we all try to do it in our own way.

I like to get the best possible value out of any sets or props which have cost hard-earned cash. The background is in fact the underside of my section of false floorboarding, and the old tea chests have come in useful for several shots.

The picture was lit using just one studio flash unit, and a 28mm wide angle lens was used on my Olympus OM1 to enhance perspective, creating a greater sense of space.



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PLATE 10

This was taken using direct sunlight from a skylight window, almost directly above and slightly in front of the model. The squalid surroundings of the derelict cottage contrast with the bizarre style of the nude.



PLATE 11 (1st of pair)

Nude on a Staircase, the first of a pair, was taken by two extremely dim 40-watt domestic light bulbs. One bulb was situated at the top of the stairs, the other in the hallway at the foot of the stairs, almost directly in front of the model.

In order to obtain a satisfactory exposure, the film speed index had to be grossly uprated. The film, Ilford HP5, was rated at EI 3200 and push processed in a developer normally used for processing prints – Paterson Acuprint, diluted 1 to 5. Even then, the exposure was very long, requiring a full two seconds at the aperture of f11, which was necessary to obtain the required depth-of-field. The camera was obviously tripod mounted for such a long exposure; and Angela had to keep very still indeed.

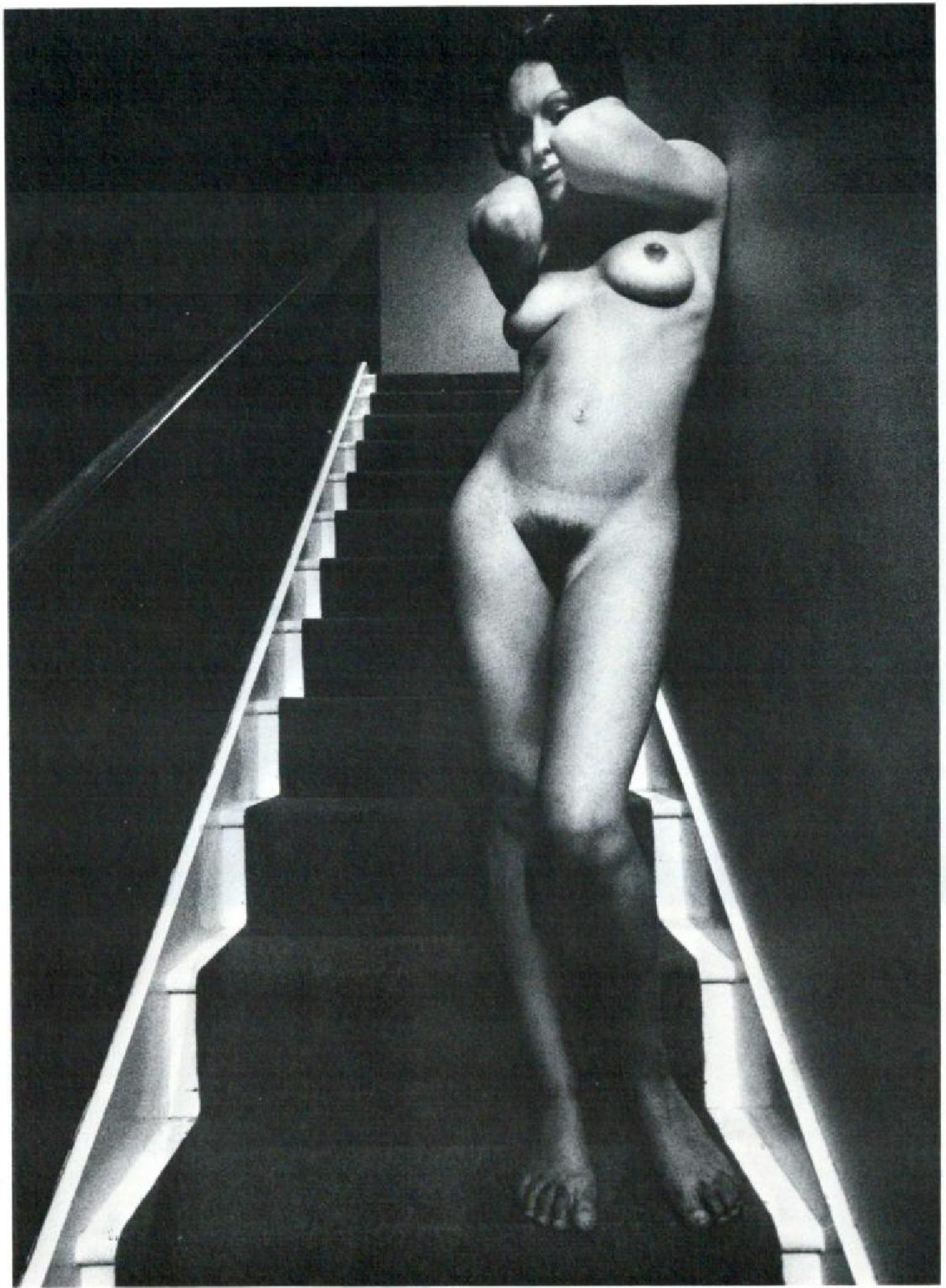


PLATE 12 (2nd of pair)

Naked Descent, the second of a pair, is a much simplified and more graphic variation of the previous picture.

However, it is not a sectional enlargement – I tried that but it didn't work. The grain was much too coarse!

This picture was taken one year later, using exactly the same technique. Unfortunately, the combination of up-rated HP5 and Acuprint developer, which had produced such excellent results, no longer works. It appears that the developer's formula has been so modified that the same technique now produces extremely high base fog. (Both shots, Contax RTS with 18mm/f4 Distagon lens)



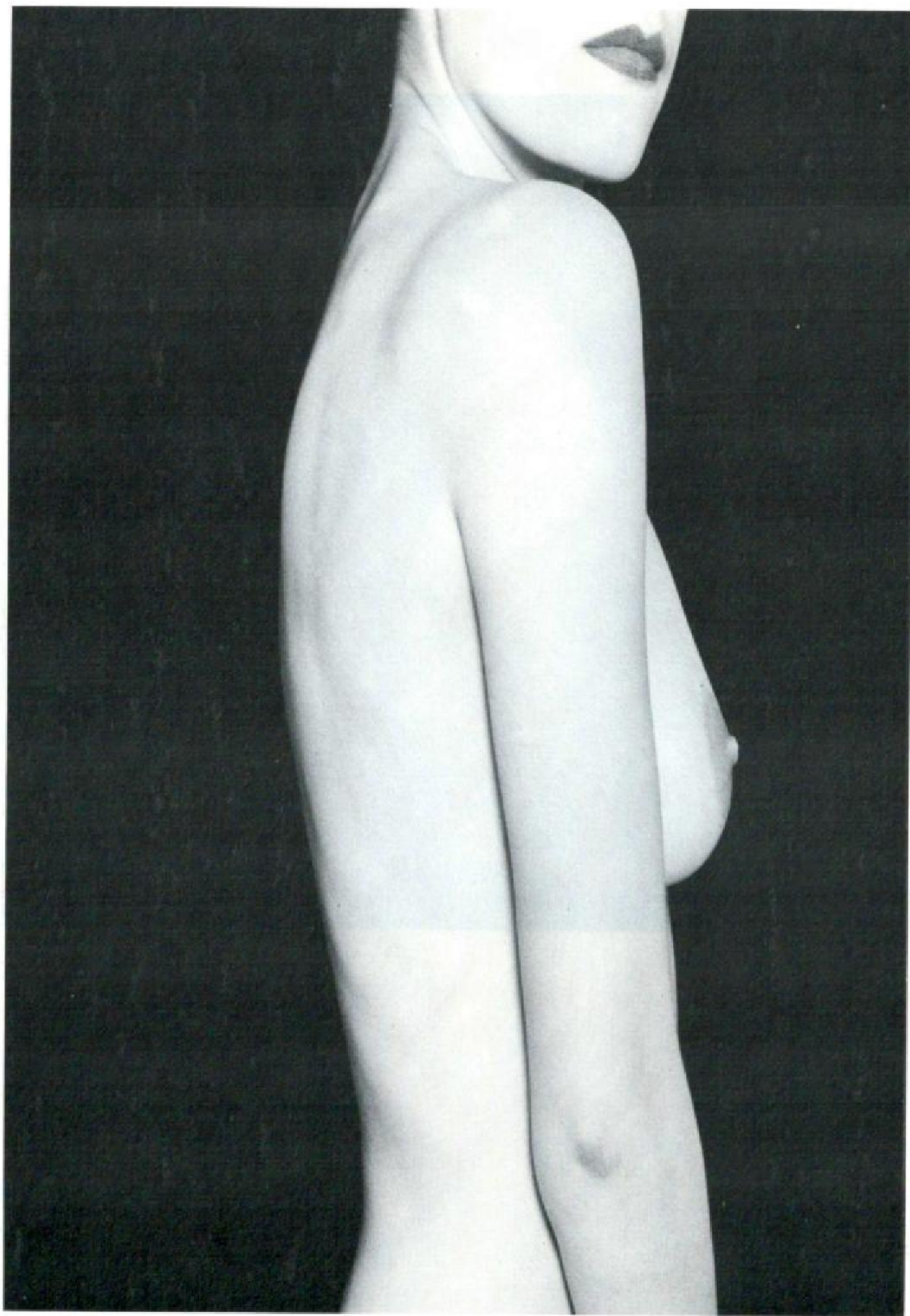


PLATE 13

An elegant, graphic, and highly angular nude study. Many photographers seem to go out of their way to avoid direct electronic flash. Yet, for the right sort of idea, it can work extremely well.

A studio flash unit, equipped with a standard general-purpose reflector bowl, was positioned directly in front of the model. A red filter (25A) provided very light skin tones, while at the same time greatly increasing contrast. Angela's dark lipstick was specially selected to emphasise the angular shape of the lower jaw. The use of an anamorphic lens attachment, fitted to the filter thread of a 100mm telephoto lens, has 'squeezed' the image, greatly enhancing the abstract qualities of this picture.



PLATE 14

A soft, rather more romantic image, taken using soft margarine smeared onto a skylight filter to provide diffusion. The lighting, too, is fairly soft – just one single studio flash unit was used. The light was direct, but diffused through a white flash brolly. Some fill-in was provided for the shadows through a white reflector.

The film, Ilford HP5, was uprated to an exposure index of 1600 to achieve a grainy effect which further enhances the general softness of this picture.

PLATE 15

The apparent simplicity of *Nude Behind Door* is deceiving. The general idea was to create a 'straight' picture which, at a quick glance, resembles a simply constructed montage.

One wall and the door of my studio was painted with white emulsion paint. With the door swung back against the wall, Angela positioned herself behind the door.

To achieve a grainy effect, and to obtain precise control over exposure, the film was uprated to EI 3200. Tungsten studio lighting was used (only the modelling lamps of my studio flash units) to provide normal exposure. The slight difference in tone between the door and the wall at the top of the picture was particularly important in providing a subtle continuation of the edge of the door through the picture. Two lighting units were used, each fitted with a white umbrella, from which the light was bounced. Each light was moved back and forth while exposure meter readings were taken from both the wall and the door. The lights were positioned to obtain one third of an f-stop difference in exposure readings between the wall and the door, so ensuring the subtle difference in tone between the two. (Contax RTS, 85mm/f1.4 Planar lens, 1/60th at f5.6)

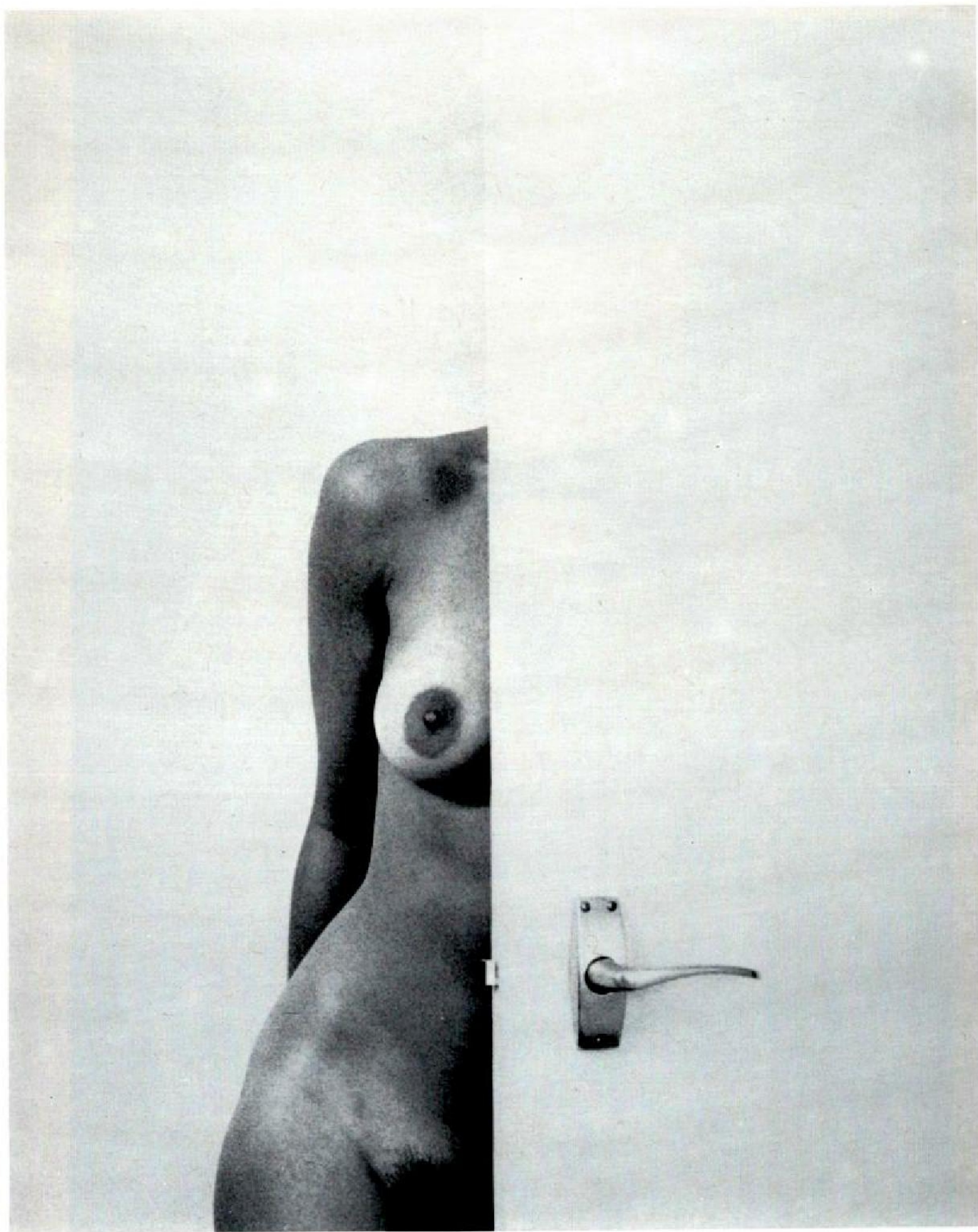
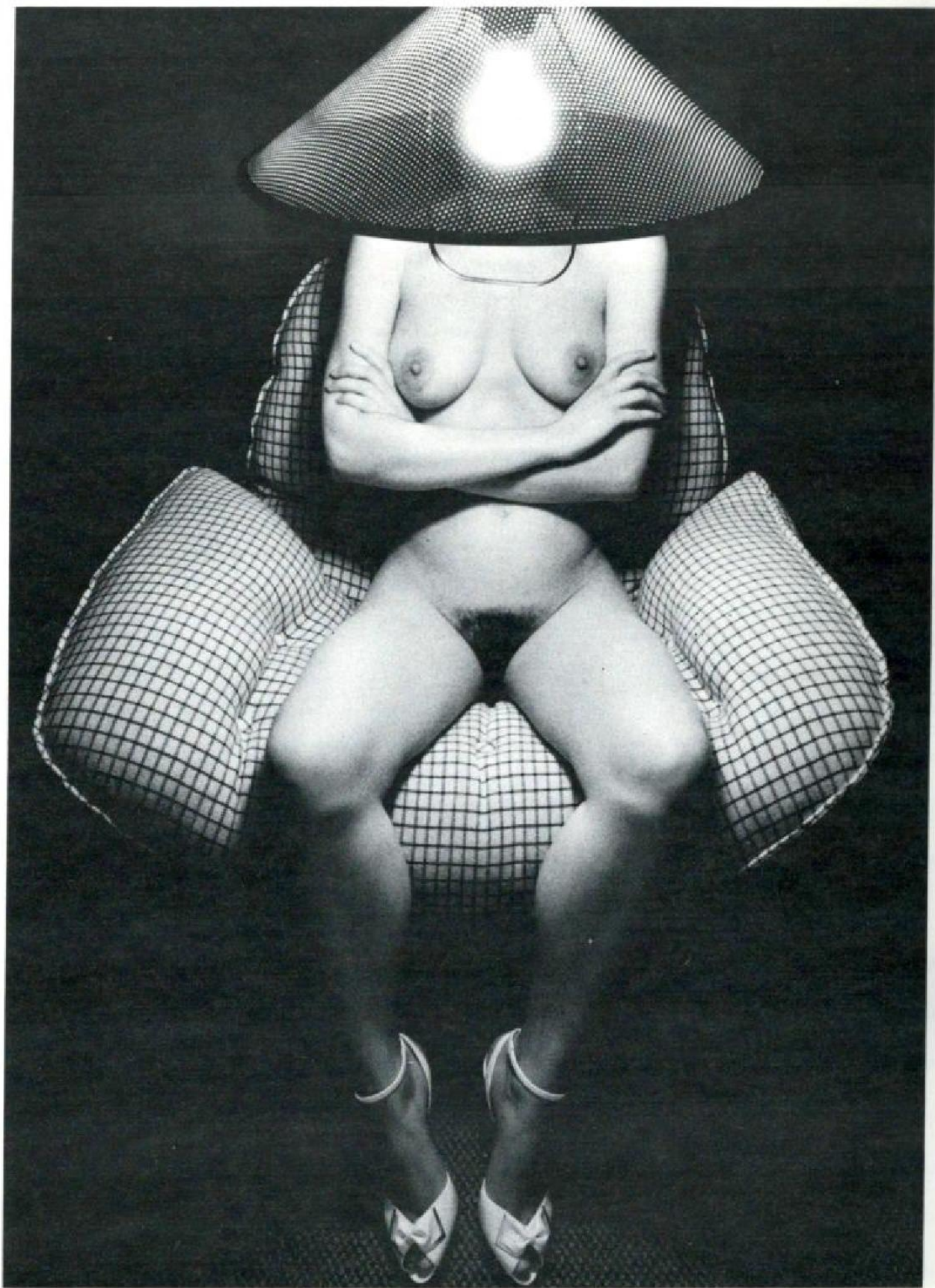


PLATE 16

There is certainly no need for me to discuss at great length the lighting used for this picture! No other source was used, just the domestic 60-watt light bulb featured above the model's head.

Even with the extremely close proximity of the light source and fast film (ISO 400), a very long exposure was still necessary because a small lens aperture was required to obtain adequate depth-of-field. Exposure time was four seconds and, of course, a tripod was essential. To provide some fill-in to the front of Angela's legs, which were virtually unlit, a sheet of white cardboard was positioned against the legs of the tripod. Although a wide-angle lens was used, distortion has been kept under control by careful positioning and composition.



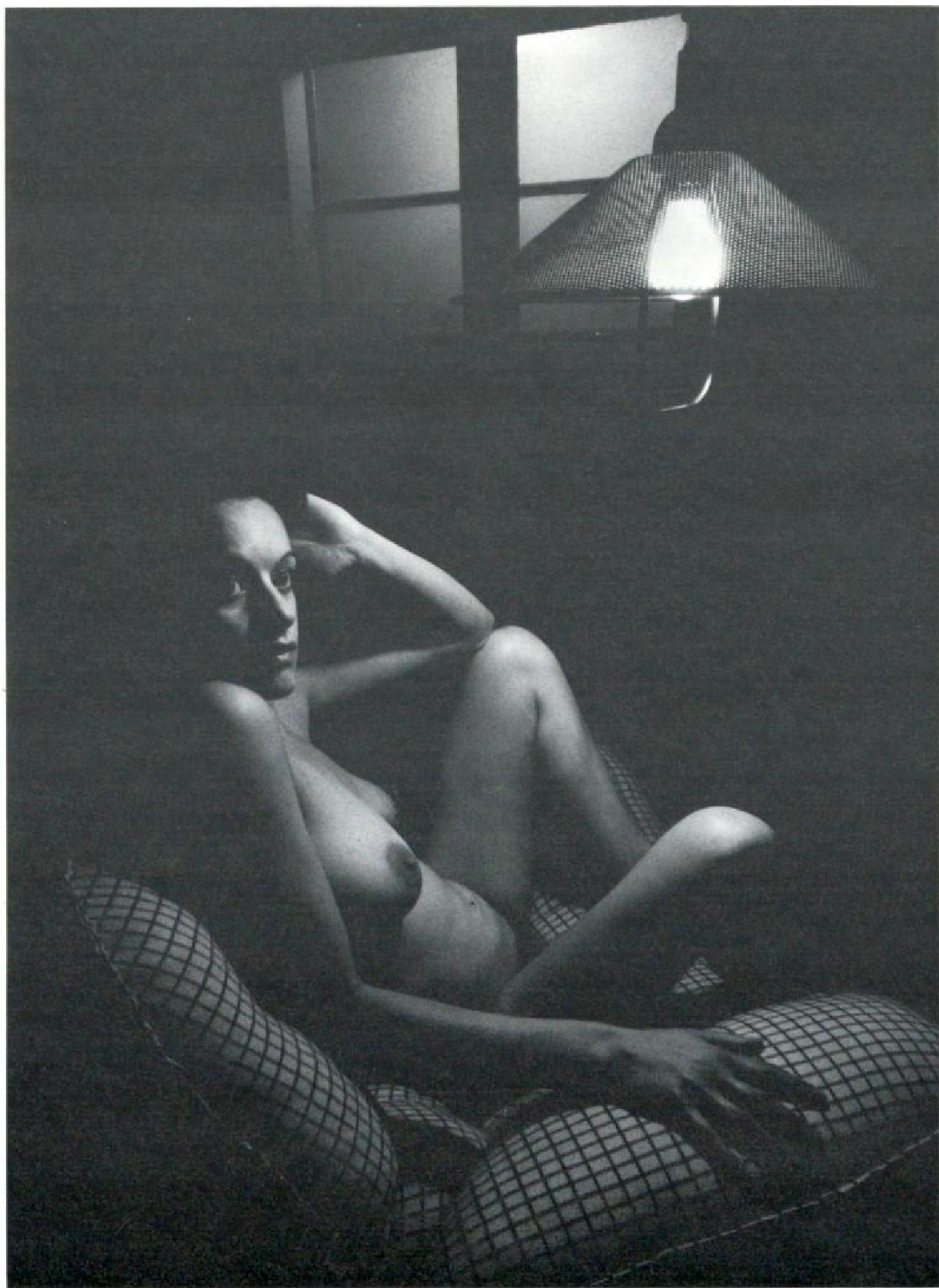


PLATE 17

The low level of illumination provided by most indoor domestic lighting requires fairly long exposure times, especially if good depth-of-field is also required. Although this dictates fairly static poses, this is no problem if a little care and thought is applied. Unusual viewpoints and camera angles will make the composition more interesting.

PLATE 18

This picture was taken by a combination of domestic room lighting, tungsten studio lighting, and the piano mounted lamp – purely for effect.

The basic exposure was measured for the normal room lighting, but additional light was directed onto the model using a single tungsten studio lamp. Light levels were still pretty low, however, and a fairly long exposure was necessary. The camera was tripod mounted and the pose static.



PLATE 19

My anamorphic lens attachment was used to compress the subject of *Nude – Distortion* (the first of a pair), exaggerating the width of the shoulders and the shape of the hands, and emphasising the tension within the model's body. Just a single light was used. A studio flash unit, positioned a little way above the model and almost directly in front of her.

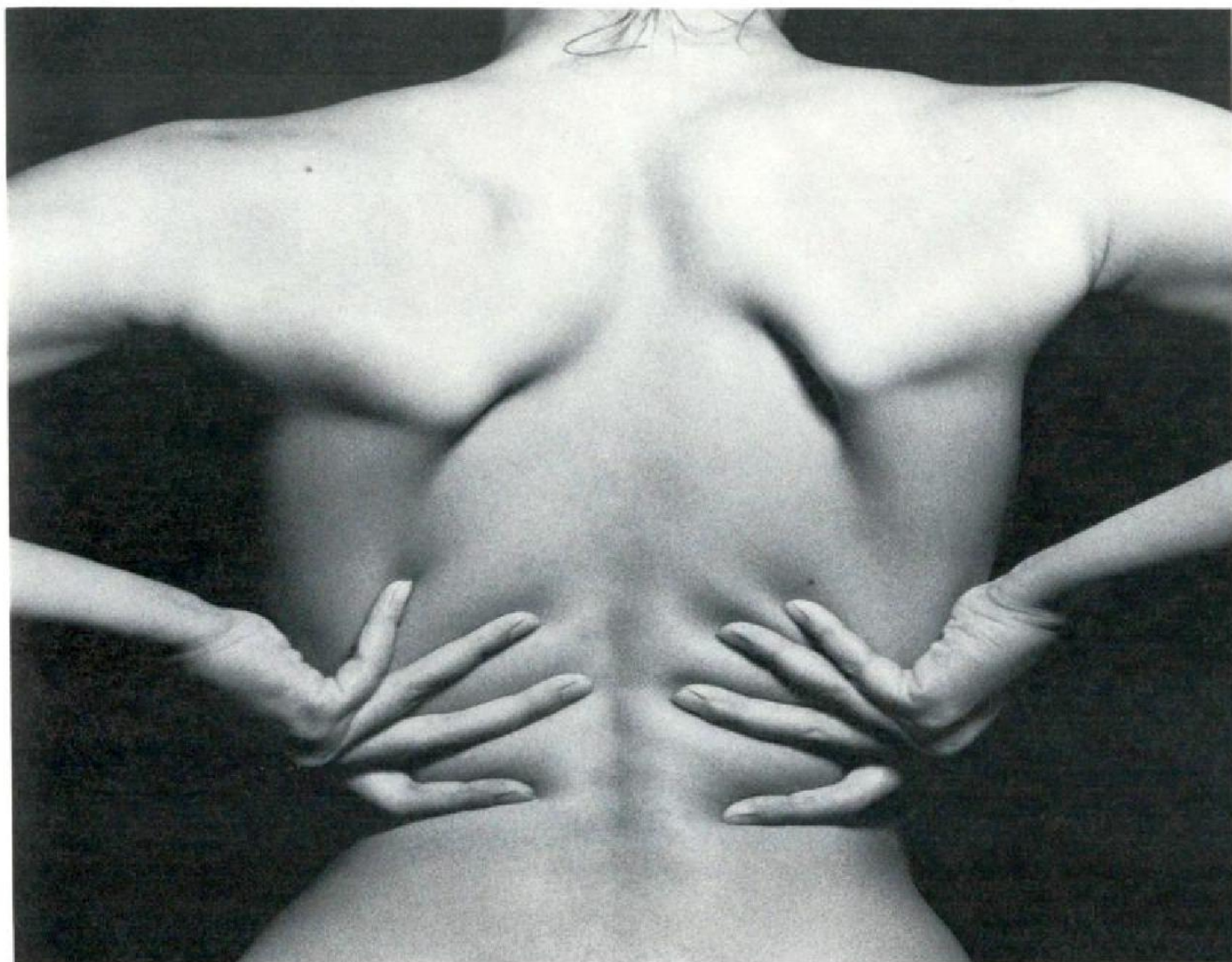


PLATE 20

This is a sectional enlargement from the previous picture. The enlarged grain structure enhances the simplified composition.

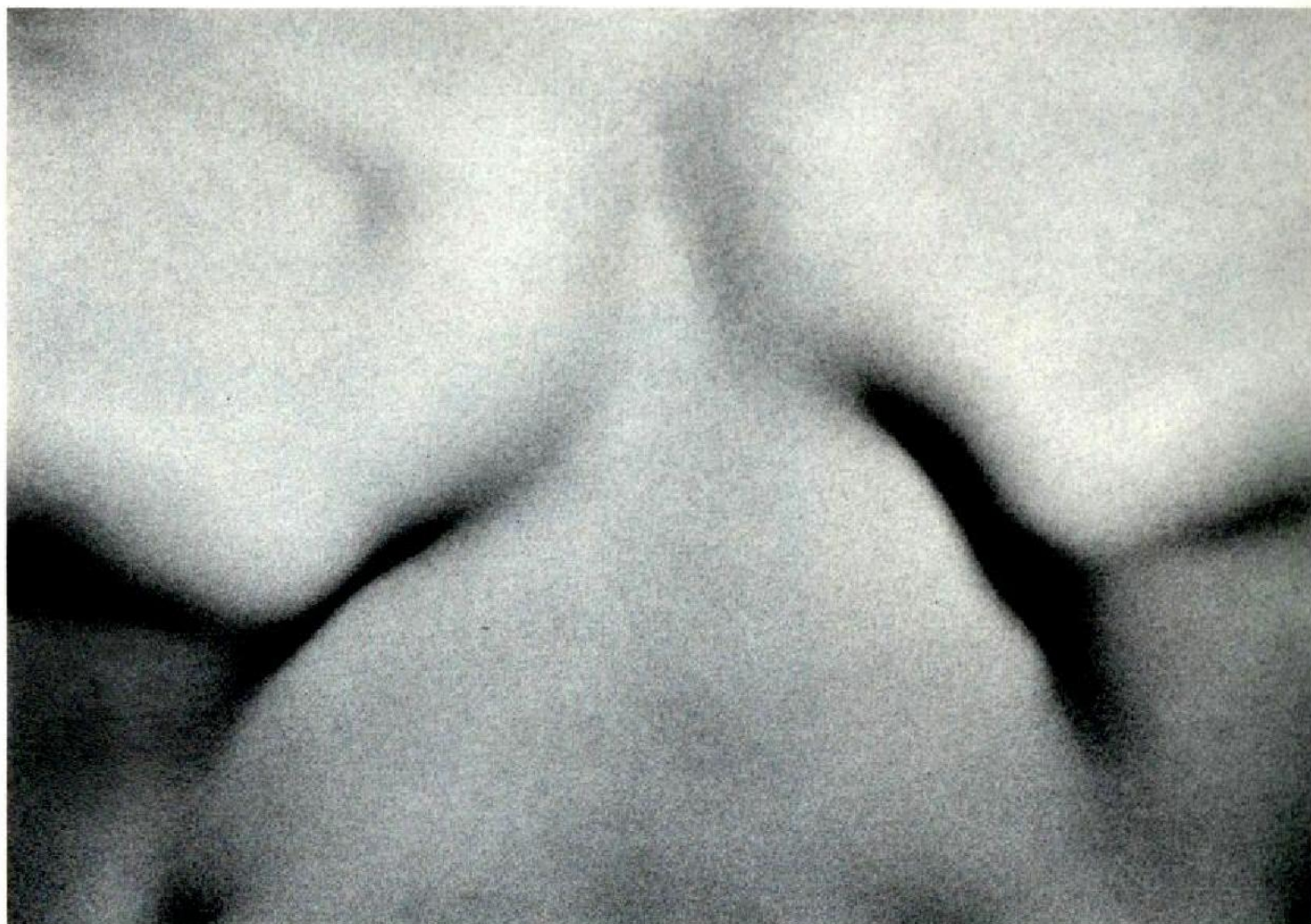


PLATE 21

Nudescape – Wales is a montage, shot partly in Wales and partly in my studio, but put together in my darkroom. The landscape was shot in 1985, the nude in my studio in 1988, specifically for the montage. The figure was lit by a single diffused studio flash unit, a red filter (25A) used over the camera lens to lighten the skin tones.

Since the landscape print was already in existence, all that was necessary was to make a print of the nude to the correct scale. The figure was then cut from the print, using a scalpel, and mounted onto the landscape. This was then copied to produce a master negative, from which extra prints can be made.

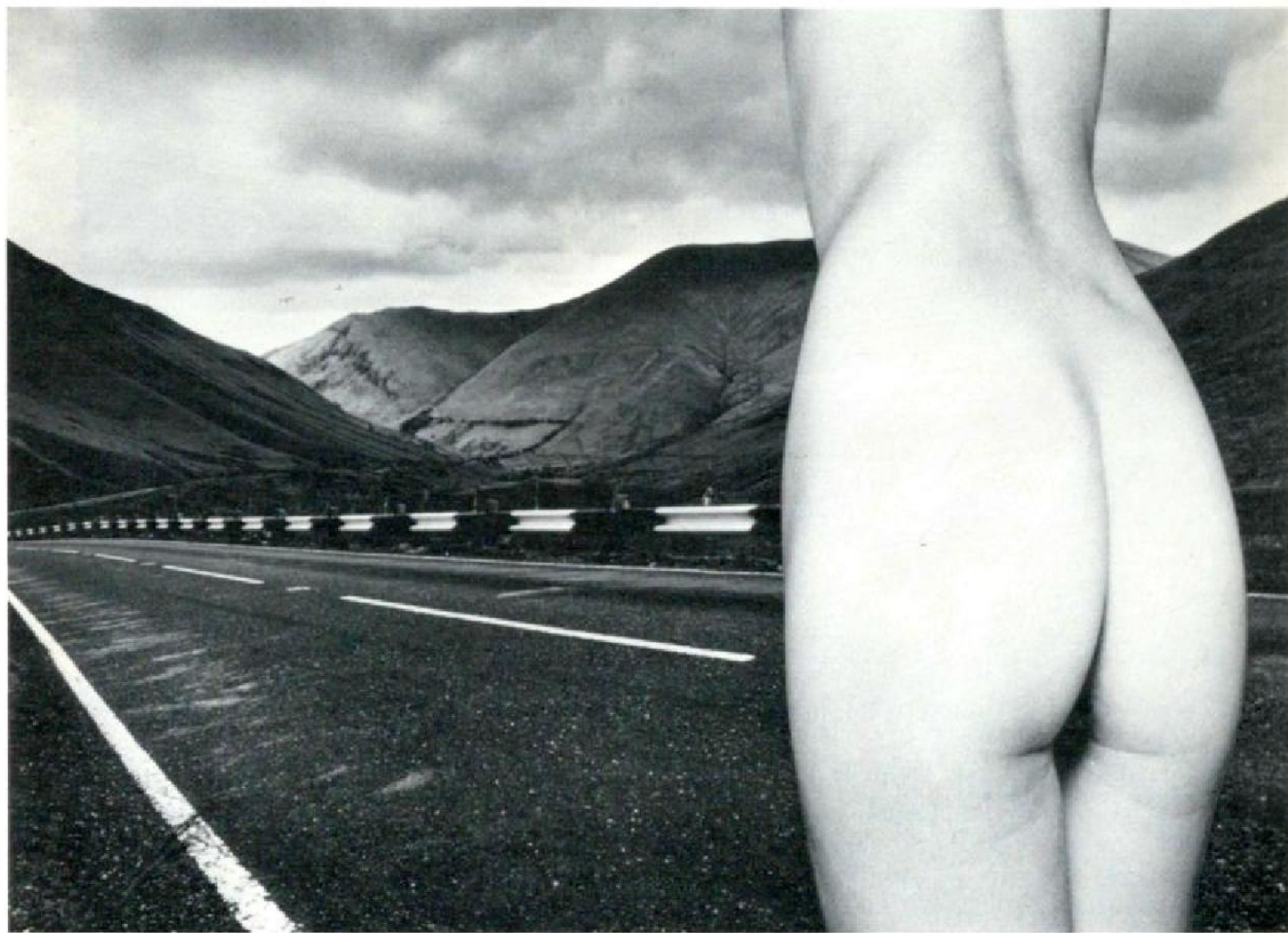


PLATE 22

Portraits, as far as I am concerned, are mostly a matter of trying to capture mood and expression. Rarely does this have anything to do with the subject's personality. To this end, I work to a set idea. The only part of uncertainty is the model's facial expression, although I do have some idea of what I require.

The pose, lighting and style of the picture is decided before commencing, but I always take a number of exposures, experimenting and gradually modifying expressions. When the film is developed, I make sheets of contact prints from the negatives and select the final image.

This shot – *Nude Portrait* – was taken using diffusion. I shot through a clear filter smeared with soft margarine. Lighting was by direct but diffused studio flash. Fill-in for the shadows was provided by a cardboard reflector.



PLATE 23

Torso was obviously a preplanned idea, and was inspired by another picture which I took six years ago.

To obtain the appearance of wide hips, Angela was photographed in a sitting position, slightly from above. The black background was simply a piece of fabric pinned to a wall and drapped downwards and across a kitchen table. Just one studio flash unit was used, without diffusion. It was positioned directly in front and someway above the model, to provide perfectly symmetrical lighting. A red (25A) filter was used over the camera lens to lighten the skin tones and increase overall contrast.

When the print was made, a mask was cut to the required shape from thin opaque card. Using the enlarger's red filter, the mask was placed in position over the image on the printing paper, projected by the enlarger's lens. The negative was then removed and the unprotected area of the print burnt in. When developed, the model's head and lower parts of her arms had effectively been obscured.

Finally, the black oval shape was drawn onto the print using a draftsman's pen, and the print was copied to produce a master negative, from which all subsequent prints can be made.



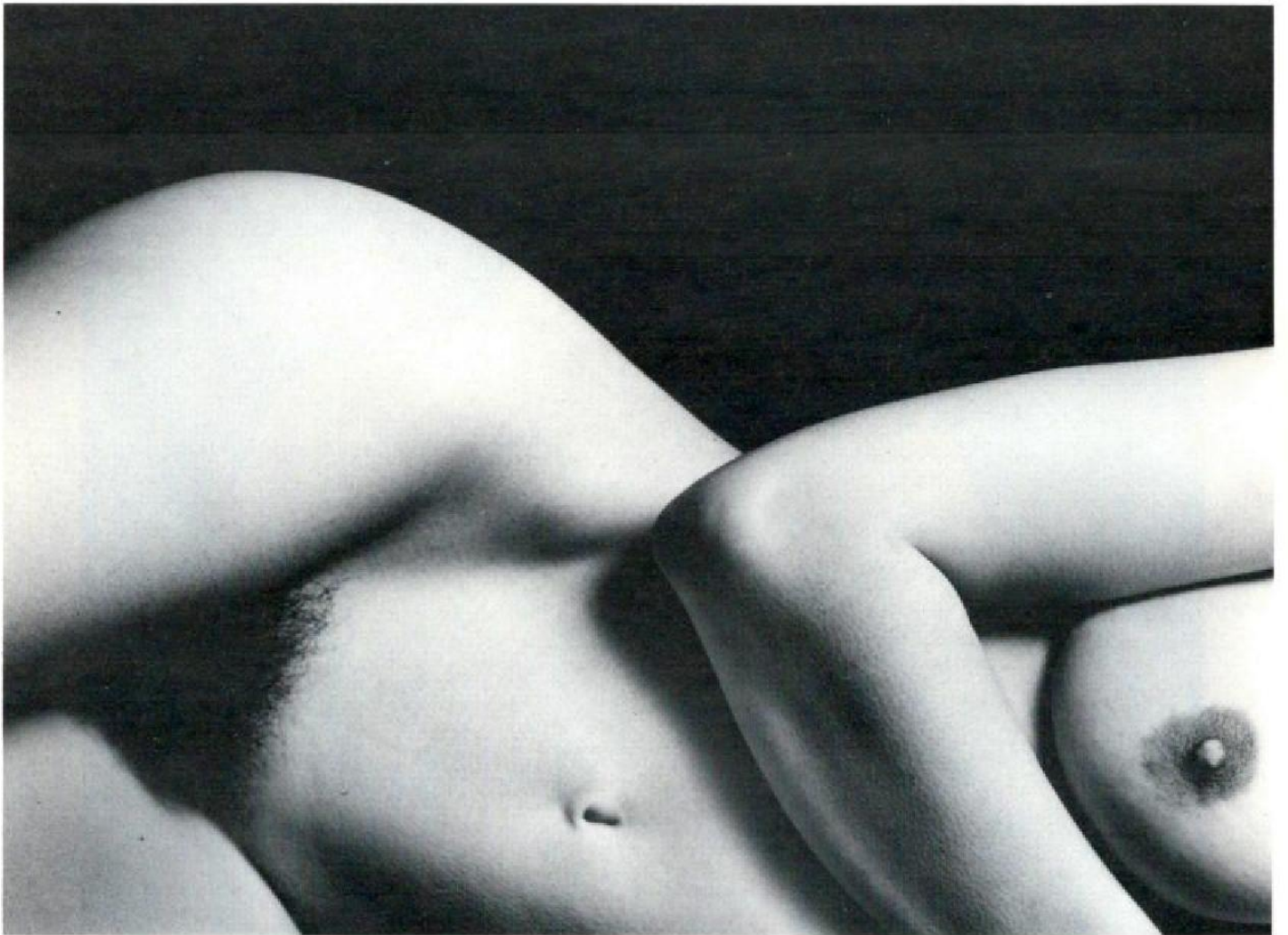


PLATE 24

Torso – Reclining is a very simple study of shape, form and texture, using just one light – a studio flash unit directed through a white umbrella to diffuse the lighting quality. The light was positioned just above and slightly to one side of the subject. A white reflector (a sheet of white cardboard), on which the model was lying, has reflected some light back into the shadows.

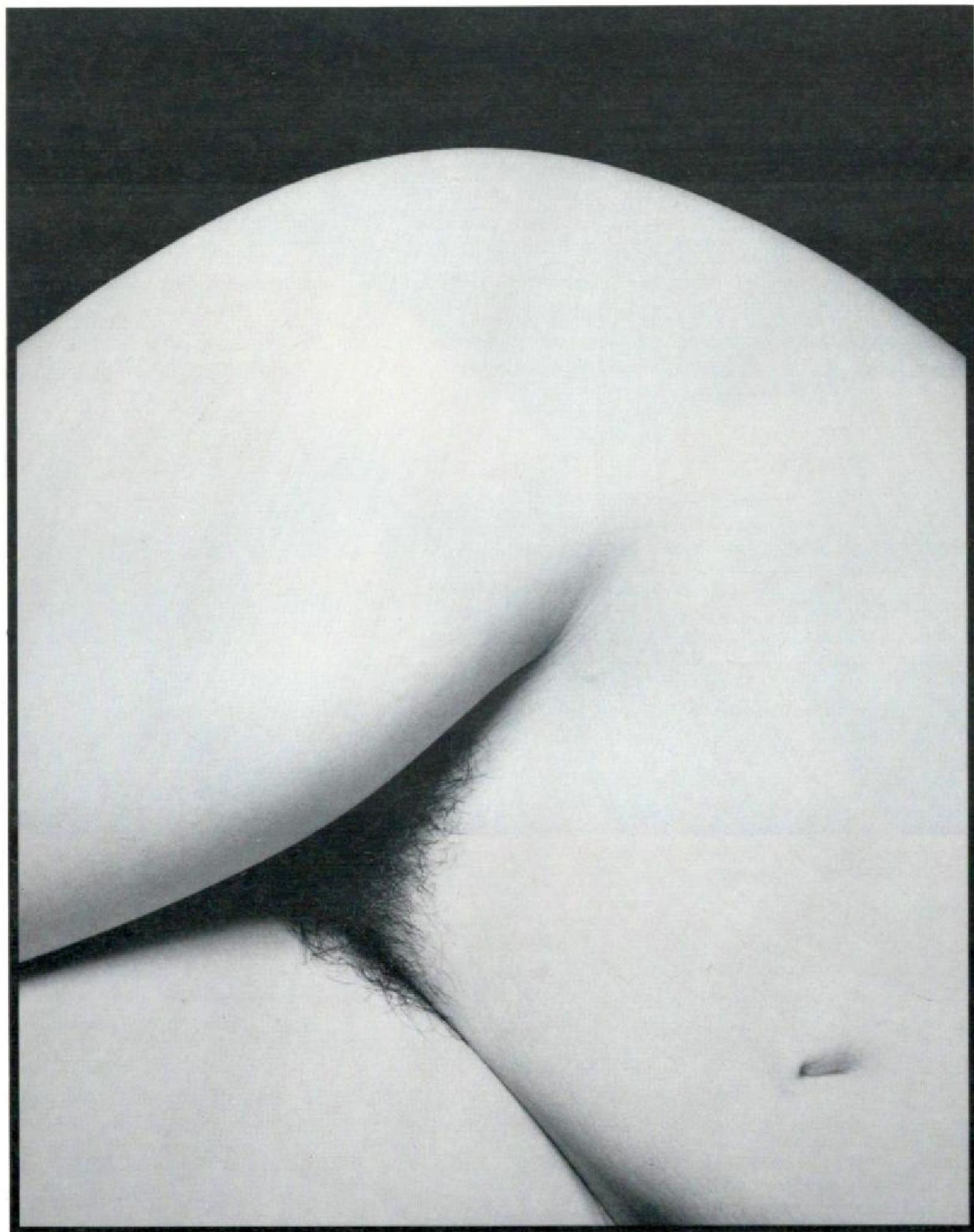


PLATE 25

Highly graphic simplified pictures, like this one, are often the most difficult to get right. This is because there is really so little to 'see'. Being nearly right is not good enough – the limitations will be painfully obvious.

In this shot, everything was a problem. I knew exactly what result I required, but it proved extremely difficult to achieve. Important aspects were the curve of the model's hip at the top of the picture, and the inner curve of the uppermost leg.

Although the lighting was very simple – just a single studio flash unit, used direct – positioning of the light was critical. The right effect was achieved by trial and error. The light rendering of skin tones was achieved by shooting through a red (25A) filter and deliberately overdeveloping the film by about 50%.

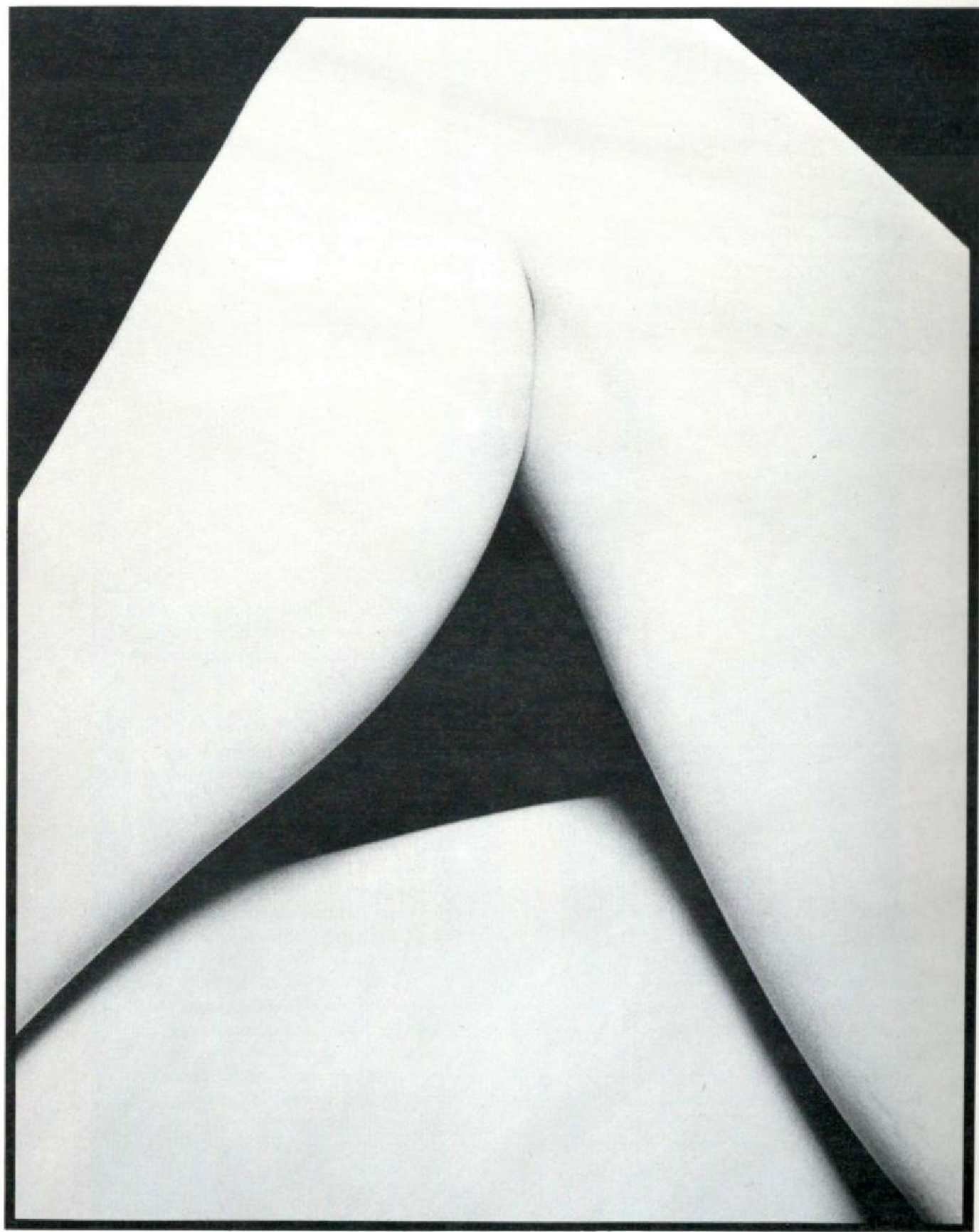
PLATE 26

Composition is very important with nude studies of a graphic nature. It has to be strong to work well.

A single studio flash was used, direct and with no diffusion. A red filter and deliberate overdevelopment of the film has ensured very light skin tones. Such pictures do not require printing onto ultra-hard grades of printing paper for high contrast. If the technique is correct when the picture is taken, grade 2 (or 3 at most), will be required.







PLATES 27 (left) & 28 (right)

Angles consists of two pictures, both employing a simple geometric shape, which while balancing as a pair are quite different. The first picture, on the left, contains an element of stark eroticism, while the other is pure graphics.

Both were shot using a single direct flash, with a red filter over the camera lens. In each case, the film was overdeveloped to increase contrast.

PLATE 29

Objects, in addition to people, can give me ideas for nude photographs. In this case the idea was stimulated by the upright lines of a central heating radiator.

My anamorphic 'squeeze' lens was used to 'stretch' the model's legs, making them appear much longer than they are in reality. Used with a standard 50mm lens, the anamorphic attachment causes severe vignetting, which I like to utilise or exploit. Often, I will fit extra filter rings between the anamorphic attachment and prime lens to increase the amount of vignetting.

The lighting was studio flash. One main light, used direct without diffusion, was positioned directly behind the camera. A second, less powerful unit, was directed onto the background. In addition, this light assisted in lightening the shadow cast by the model.



PLATE 30

A very simple idea, quite easy to realise, producing an interesting and amusing effect.

Contrary to many people's beliefs, there has been neither photographic trickery nor contortion. The model has simply brushed her long hair forward, over her face. The surreal element is reinforced by shooting with my anamorphic lens attachment, to squeeze the image and create the vignetting at the top and bottom of the picture.

Lighting, as usual for me, is uncomplicated. Just a single studio flash unit, used direct but diffused through a white brolly. A cardboard reflector, positioned on a spare lighting stand, filled in the shadows.



PLATE 31

Although others find this deliberate attempt at eroticism successful, I am not particularly fond of this photograph.

It is lit by a single studio flash unit, fitted with a white flash umbrella to bounce the light, positioned directly in front of the subject. Black light-absorbing panels, or black reflectors as they are sometimes called, were positioned at either side of the model to enhance the darker outline effect. The film used, unusually for me, was a Kodak T-Max 400. It is not particularly helpful in this kind of photography.



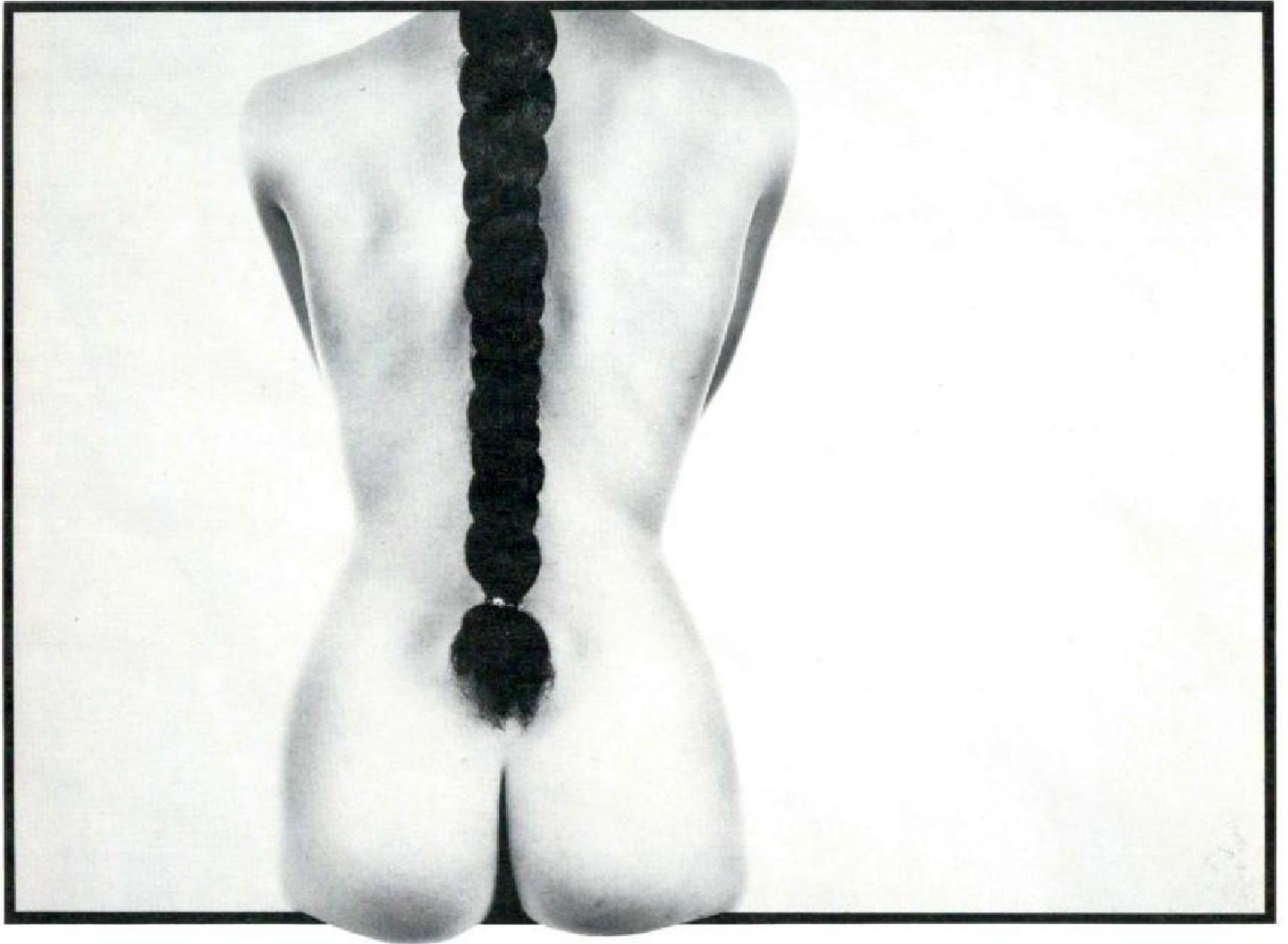


PLATE 32

The Sitter is really more about the two-dimensional qualities of the photographic image than it is about nude photography.

In making this picture, Angela sat on the edge of an upright drawing board, whose surface is white. A white painted wall in front of her was lit by two small studio flash units. Two further flash units, fitted with white bounce brollies, were positioned at an angle of approximately 45 degrees to the subject. A black reflector, or light absorber, was placed at each side of the model to produce a slight edge effect of darkening. This lighting, plus deliberate overdevelopment of the film, has produced a pencil drawing-like effect when printed on grade 3 printing paper.

The lower black border, on which

the model appears to sit, was printed in after the initial printing exposure. Two steel rulers were sellotaped together, leaving a border-width gap between them. Using the image of the negative projected through the enlarger's red filter, the rulers were positioned on the printing paper. A simple card cut-out, the same shape as the buttocks, was positioned in the required place, over the gap between the rulers. The rest of the print was protected by a sheet of card while the negative was removed from the enlarger and the border printed in.

For a slightly grainy effect from a medium format negative, it was necessary to uprate the ISO 400 Ilford HP5 film to EI 1600 and push process. (Mamiya RB67 Pro-S camera, with 180mm/f4.5 lens)



PLATE 33

The proportions of the figure in *Fat Image of a Slim Girl* appear ample, yet the actual structure of the body is that of a slim person.

My anamorphic lens attachment has been used to compress the horizontal image of the reclining nude form. The lighting was positioned to emphasise these characteristics while Angela forced her stomach out, to further reinforce the impression.

PLATE 34

Pubic Hair – 1st Class involves a combination of diffusion, using a plain glass filter smeared with soft margarine, and differential focus, which has been used to create a sense of movement.

A single flash unit, fitted with a bounce-brolly for soft light, was positioned directly in front of the model, more or less in line with the axis of the camera lens. A further flash unit was used to light a white background and a black light absorber (sheet of black cardboard) was positioned on a stand, behind the model, producing a slightly darker outline. (Pentax 6 × 7 camera, with 165mm/f2.8 lens)

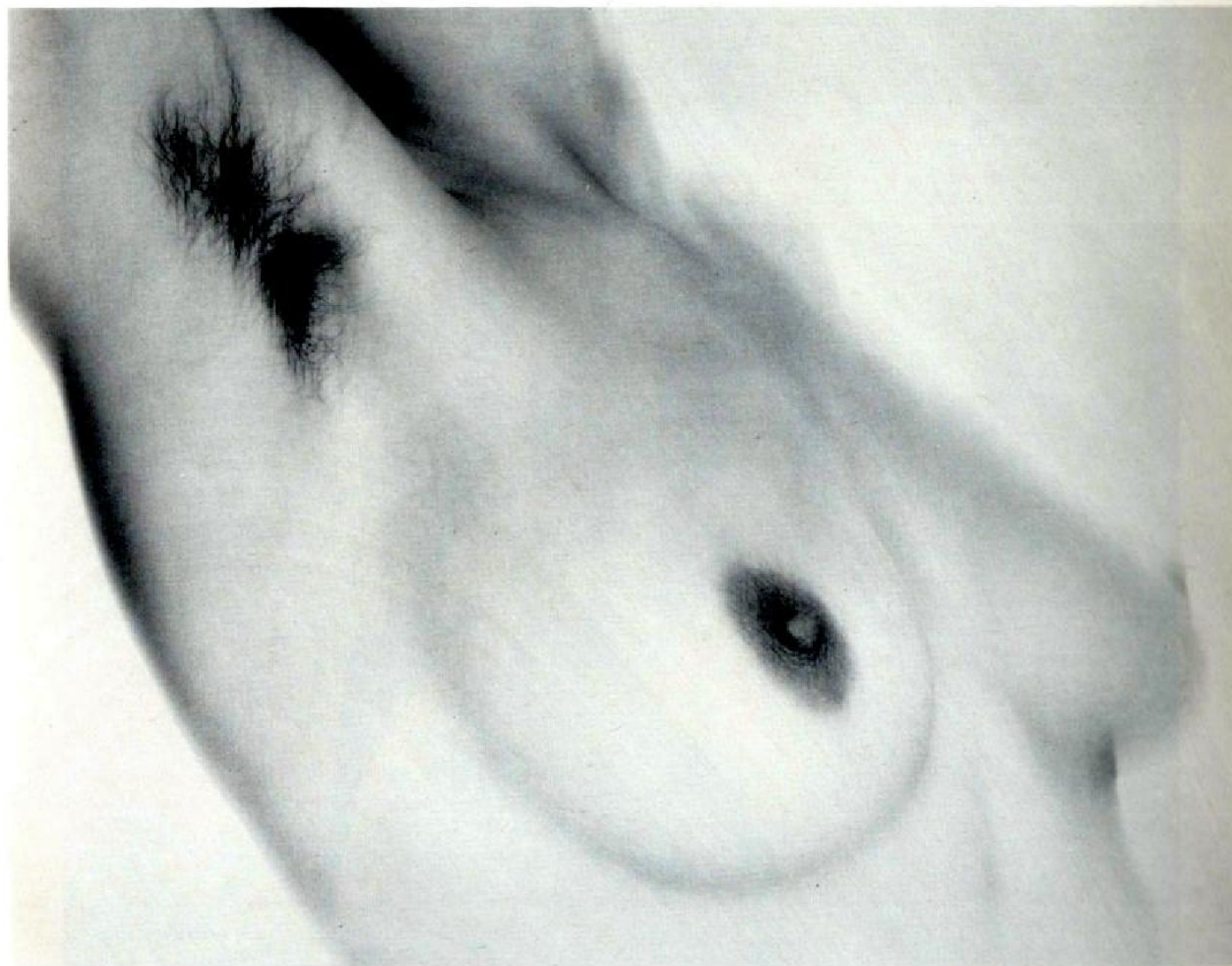


PLATE 35

A model's pose and expression are usually the key ingredients for establishing the mood of a photograph. Lighting and props must be in harmony with such ideas.

For this image I used a single studio flash unit, fitted with a silver flash brolly, positioned in front, slightly to the left and quite high above the model. Some slight fill-in was provided by a white cardboard reflector, to the right and just out of picture. The floorboards are my purpose-made section of false flooring.



PLATES 36, 37 & 38

'A Short Sequence'

Just a white dressing gown provided the idea for *A Short Sequence*.

Studio flash was used, the main light being positioned quite high and to one side of the model, to emphasise the folds and texture of the gown.







PLATE 39

Nude by Window was lit using only the daylight from the window of a derelict cottage. The problems associated with available light photography are those of low light intensity and lighting contrast, which is excessively high between highlight and shadow values.

A sturdy tripod and static pose solved the first problem, although Angela still had to exercise great care to remain perfectly still during the half-a-second exposure which was necessary. The most important part of the second problem was solved by using a sheet of silver-foil-backed insulation board, propped against the legs of my tripod, to act as a fill-in reflector.

In an effort to control contrast still further, the film was slightly over-exposed and development time reduced. This produced a somewhat lower contrast negative, which was a little easier to print. However, it was still necessary, when printing, to burn-in the area of the window itself. It required considerably more exposure than the rest of the picture.

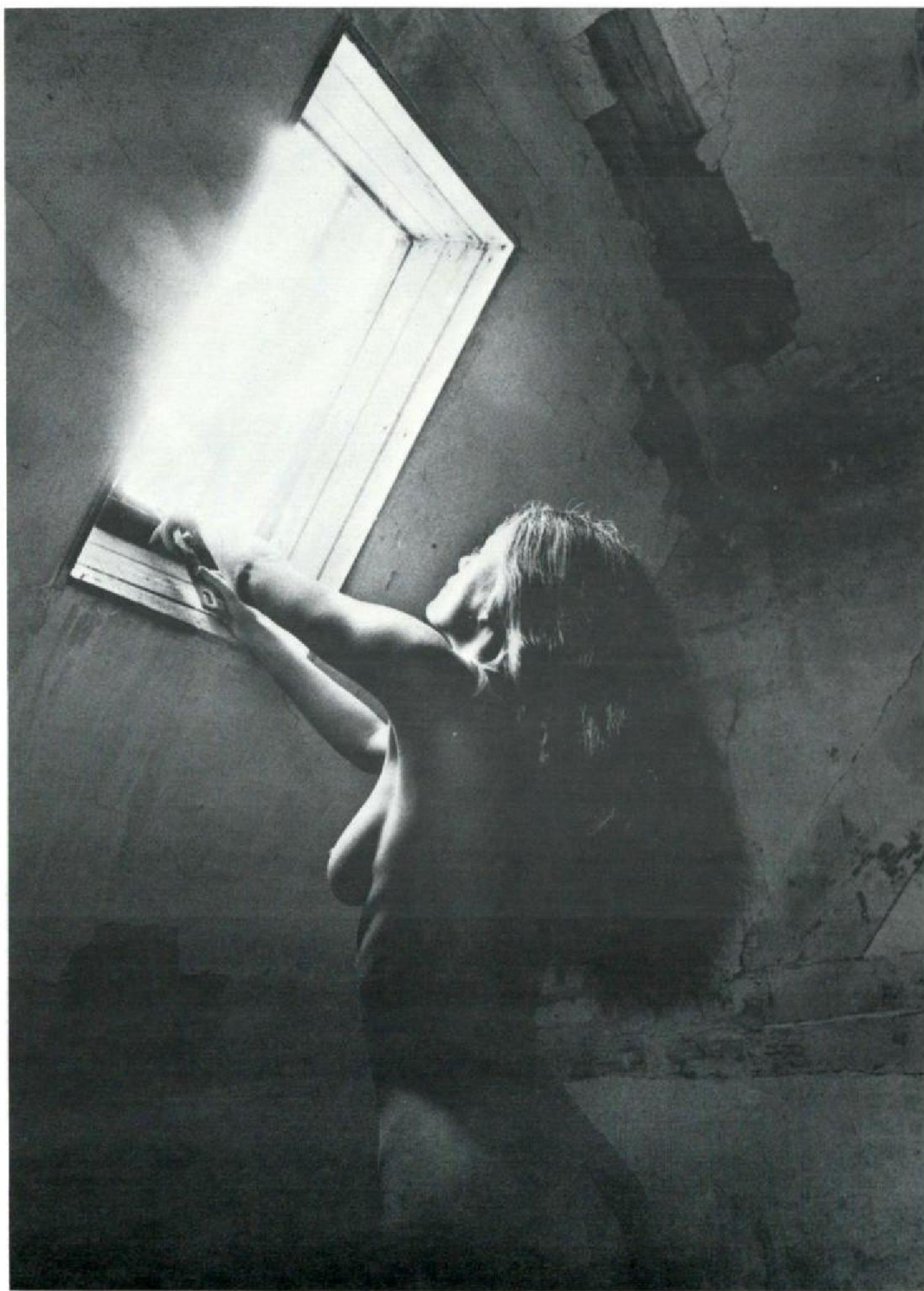


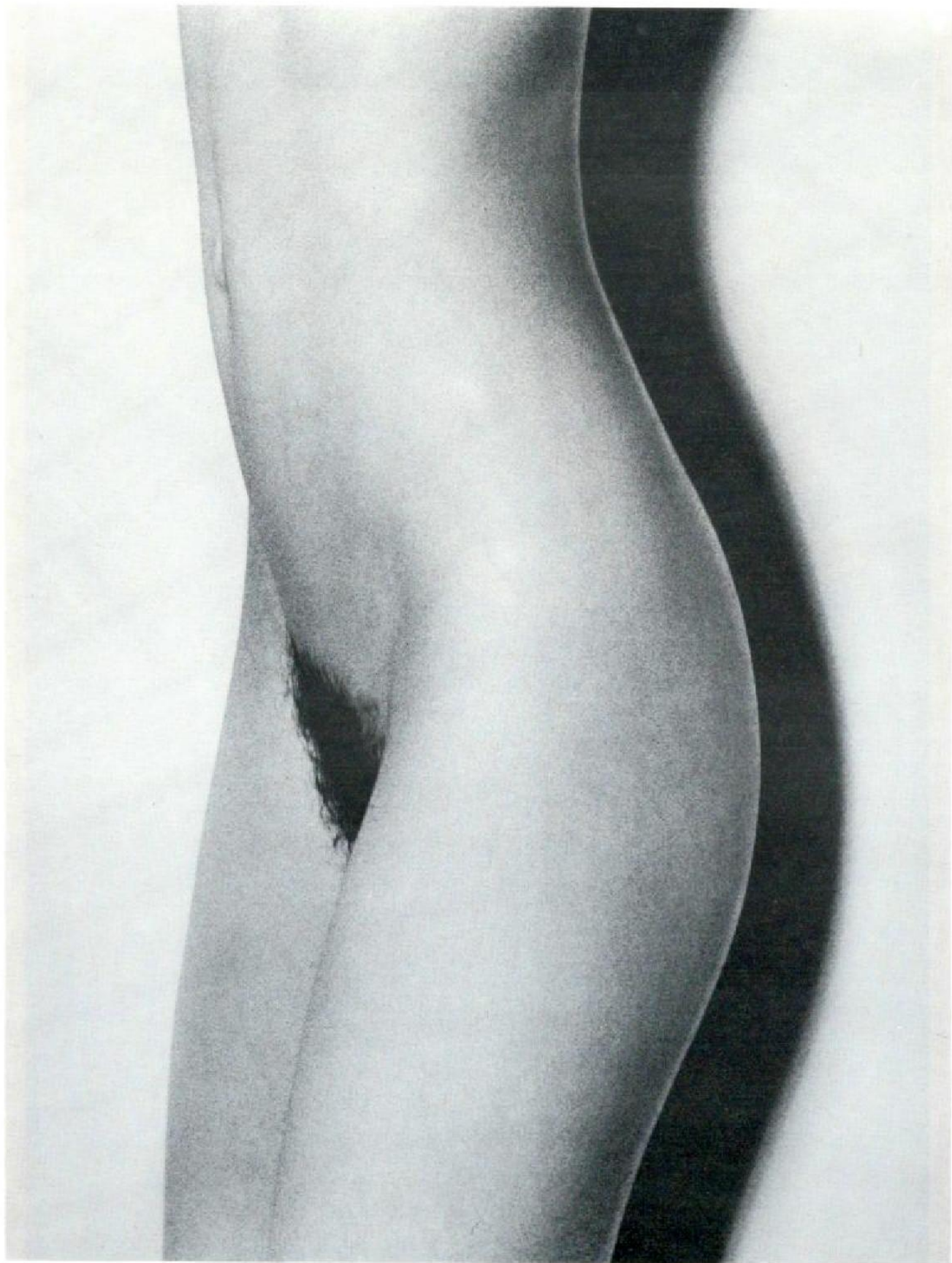
PLATE 40

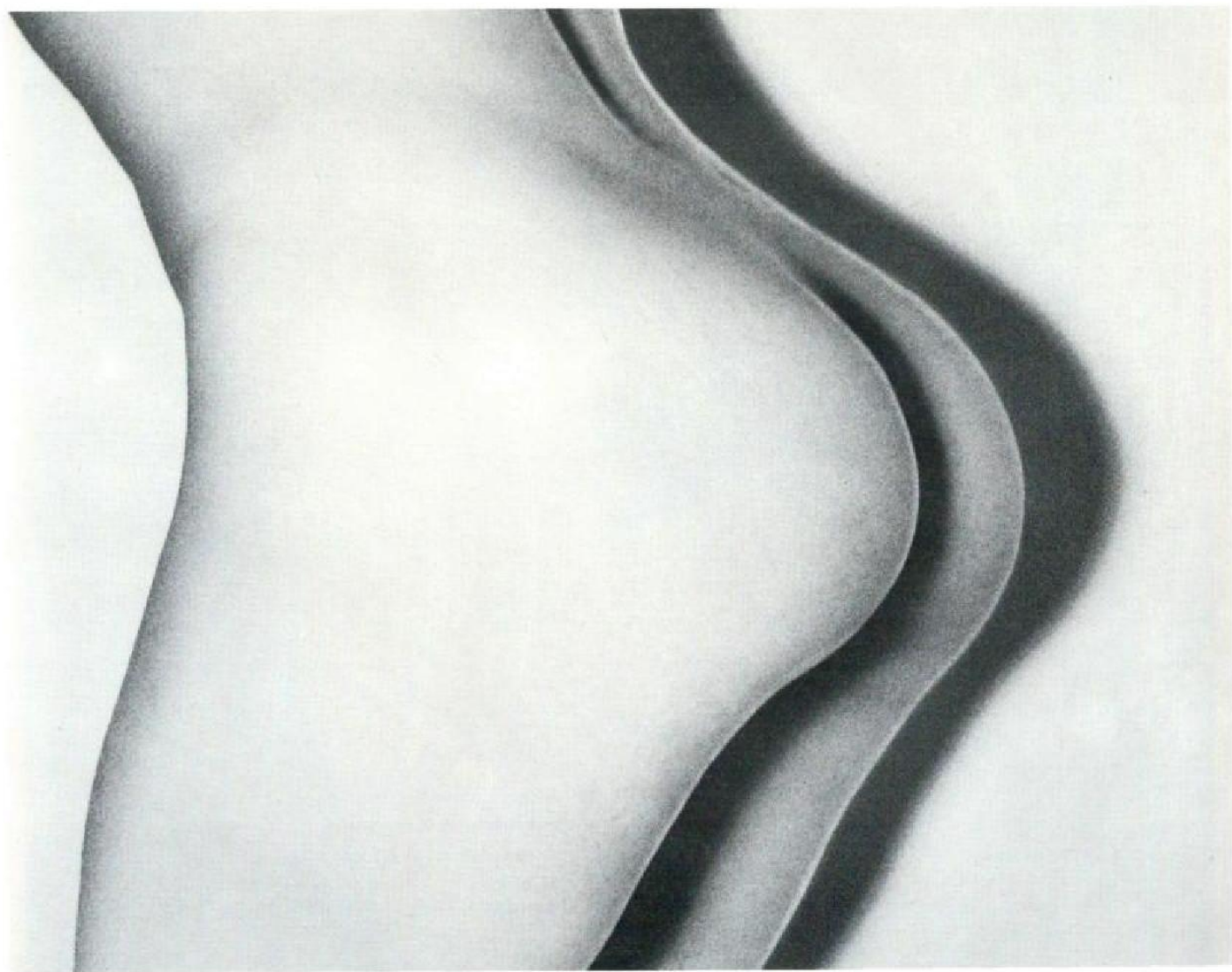
Nude by Skylight is another available light nude study which was difficult to print successfully. As always with this sort of shot, contrast is a serious problem.

The level of illumination was quite low anywhere away from immediately below the skylight. However, since the room was extremely small it was not possible to erect a tripod. This made it necessary to uprate the film speed and push process, merely to obtain an acceptable exposure which could safely be hand-held.

During printing, it was necessary to burn-in the area of the skylight window in order to produce some detail. However, if this is overdone, the window starts to look more like a fluorescent light source, completely losing the effect of the sunlight bursting through it, and completely destroying the entire mood of the picture. (Contax RTS, with 18mm/f4 Distagon lens. Ilford HP5 rated at EI 1600, developed in Paterson Acuspeed)







PLATES 41 & 42 (picture pair)

This pair of highly abstract nudes features real but exaggerated curves. I have always admired the beautiful natural curves of Angela's body, from the base of her back, through her hips, round her buttocks, and down to the tops of her legs. These pictures are my way of emphasising these shapes.

My anamorphic lens attachment was used for the two shots constituting *Curves*. For the first, it was used to create vertical compression (the most usual way) and for the second, horizontal compression. A red (25A) filter was used to lighten the skin tones, adding to the simple graphics of the pictures. In this case, however, it was not combined with overdevelopment of the film to produce nearly pure white skin tones.

Lighting was by direct studio flash, fitted with a diffusion umbrella. The light was directed at the model, slightly from one side, casting a distinct shadow against the white wall against which she stood. Some of the light is reflected back off the wall onto the model, creating a rim-light effect. This, combined with the heavy shadow, greatly emphasises the curves. The second picture of the pair has a great impression of depth between the buttocks, which I find particularly attractive.

PLATE 43

Many photographers of the nude overcomplicate lighting when working in the studio. A great deal can be achieved with a single light, sometimes with the addition of a simple reflector.

This composition, whilst not original, works very well. The nude is a restricted subject in some respects. After all, you are always dealing with the same basic shapes and features. It is really up to each photographer to 'interpret' the subject, no matter how familiar, in his own particular way.

For this shot, I have gone for a strongly three-dimensional effect, achieved through careful positioning of the single light. A white cardboard reflector, on which the model is resting, provides fill-in for the shadows.

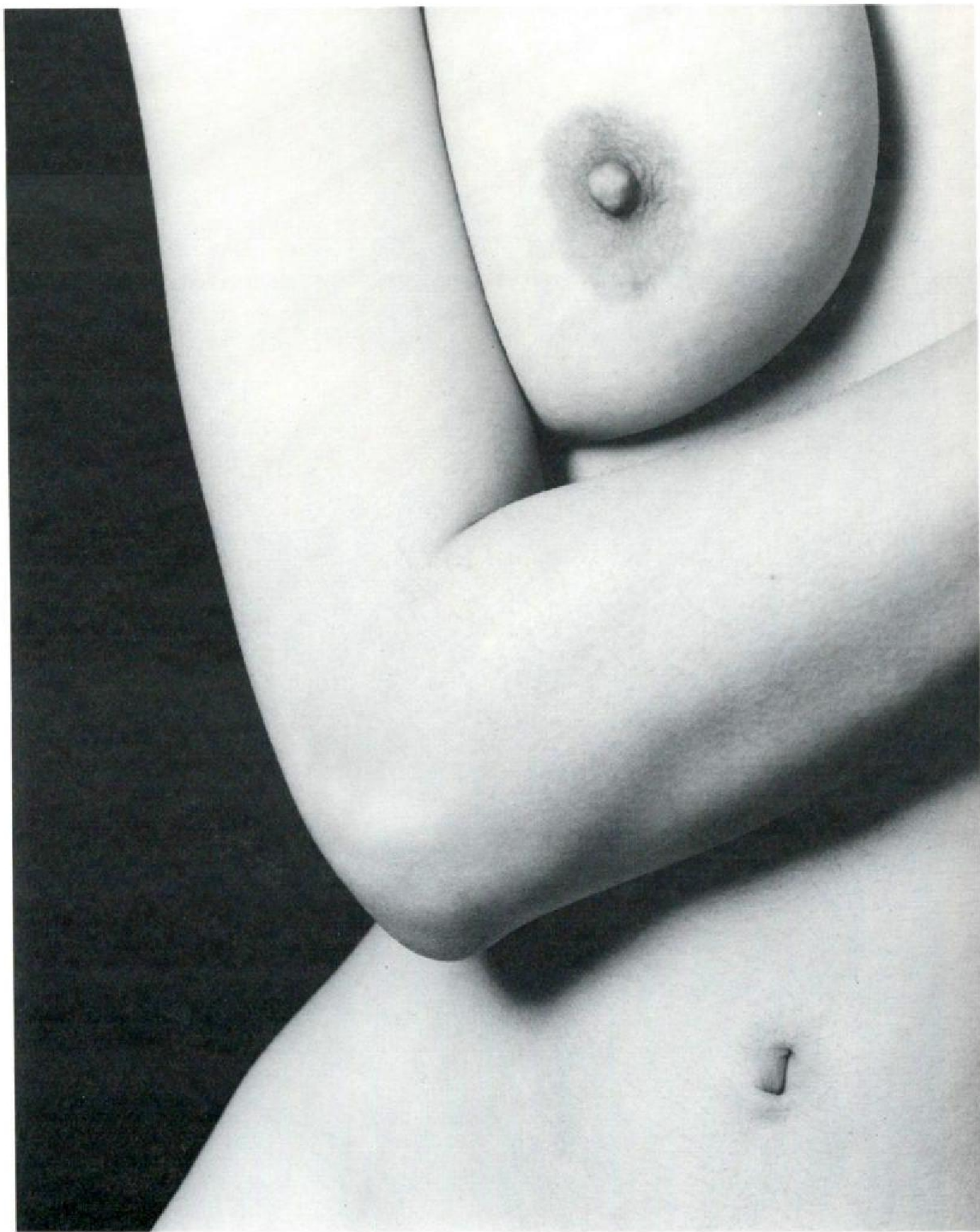


PLATE 44

Such a low angle on a nude study is not always the easiest of things to do. The picture was taken using one studio flash unit. This was positioned just above the model and slightly to one side. Perspective from the low camera angle has been emphasised by using a 21mm ultra wide angle lens.

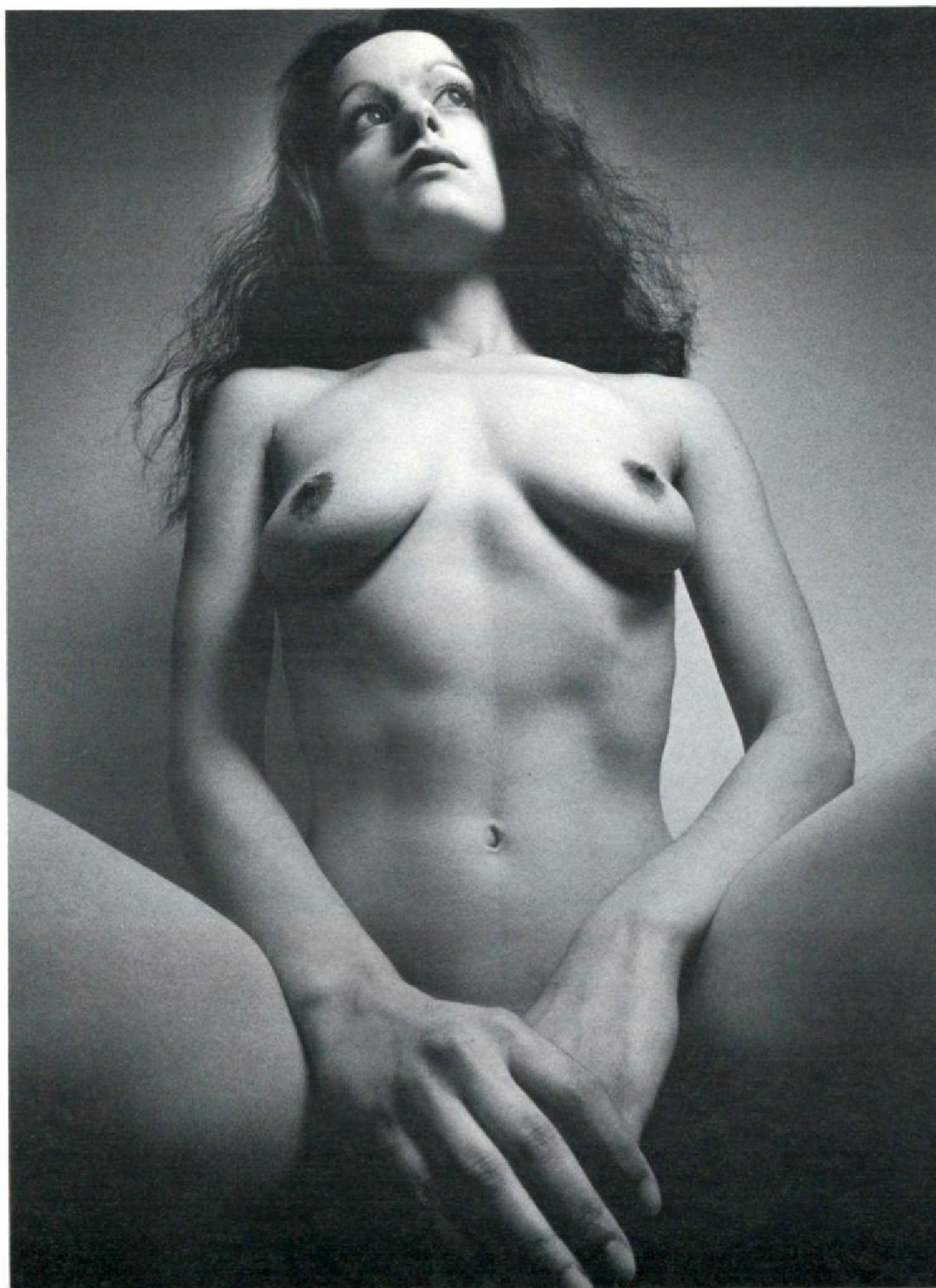


PLATE 45

Nude by Gate relies quite heavily on simplicity for its success. It is, I find, far too easy to get overcomplicated when shooting outdoor nudes. There is always the temptation to try to include too much within the picture. Most nude studies are improved by excluding unnecessary items from the image, not by adding them. This only distracts from what I consider to be the most important element – the nude herself.

This picture was taken on a bright but overcast day. This sort of lighting is most usually preferable to bright sunny days, when high contrast and heavy shadows can become a real problem. Unless that is, you wish to make a feature of such things. (Pentax 6 × 7 camera, with 90mm/f2.8 lens)



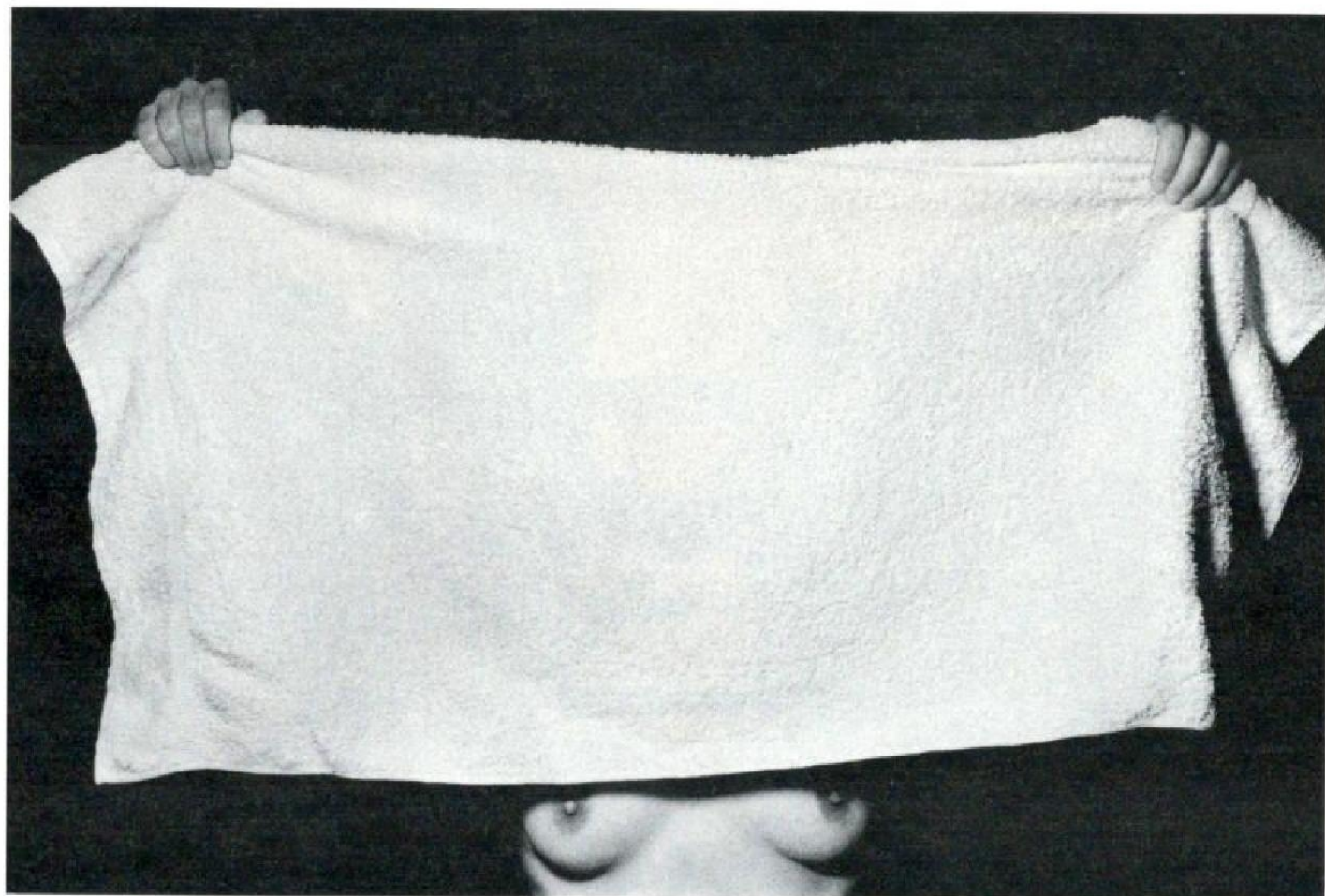


PLATE 46

A very simple idea inspired by the popular belief that a large area of light tone in a picture of predominantly darker tones is distracting. The picture was lit by studio flash.

PLATES 47 (left) & 48 (right)

Like many photographers, sometimes I find it interesting to work on picture pairs, as in *Knickers – One Pair*. It can force you to consider precisely how the final result will be displayed, and therefore requires a positive and constructive approach.

The pictures were taken in my studio by electronic flash. Three units were used: one to light a dark painted canvas background, used at half power for a subdued lighting effect; another, more powerful unit, fitted with a diffusion umbrella, to light the subject; and a third unit, fitted with a black honeycomb attachment, to throw a confined area of more intense light onto the white briefs.

Considerable diffusion of the image was achieved by smearing soft margarine onto a clear skylight filter and the film, Ilford HP5 (normal rating ISO 400), was uprated to EI 1600 and developed in Paterson Acuspeed for a grainy effect.





PLATE 49 (1st of pair)

A simple nude study which I have found requires time to be fully appreciated. The more I look at it, the more I like it.

The lighting is very simple. Just one studio flash unit and a reflector were used. The flash unit was used direct, with no diffusion, for a fairly hard lighting quality. It was positioned directly in front of the model, but slightly to the right of the camera position. A white cardboard reflector was used to provide a little fill-in to the shadow behind the model's right arm.

The use of my anamorphic lens has stretched the nude form, enhancing the length of the model's arms, and concentrating the viewer's attention on her clenched hands.

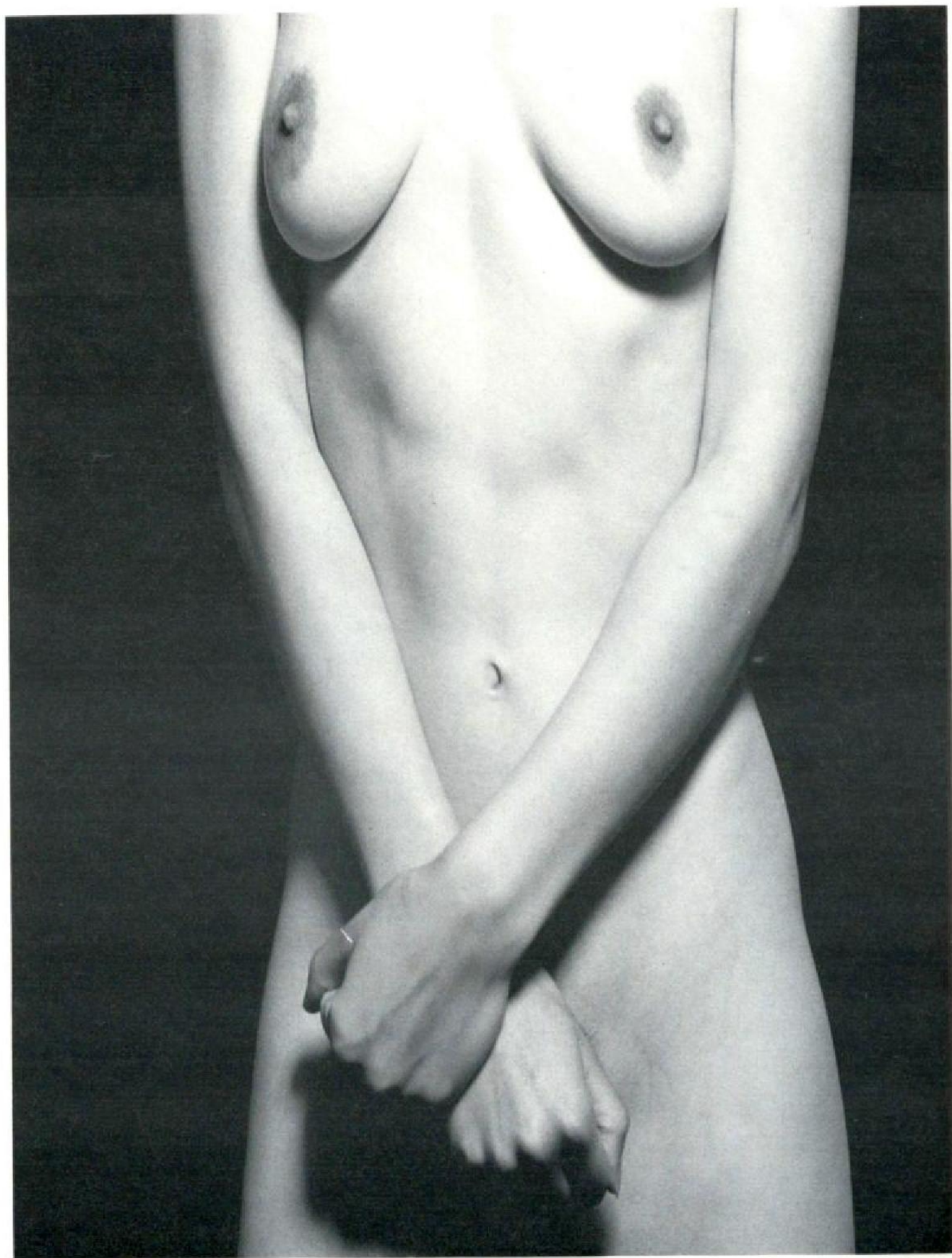


PLATE 50 (2nd of pair)

Tone simplification, carefully positioned lighting and the use of an anamorphic 'squeeze' lens enable me to create a most unusual nude study.

The picture was taken using a red (25A) filter over the camera lens, and the film was over-developed by 50%, to record the skin tones as very light. This emphasises the important shadow areas, which were produced by positioning a single studio flash unit – diffused by a white umbrella – directly in front of the subject and quite high above her.

The anamorphic lens attachment has squeezed the image, greatly enhancing the effect and making the picture rather more surrealistic.

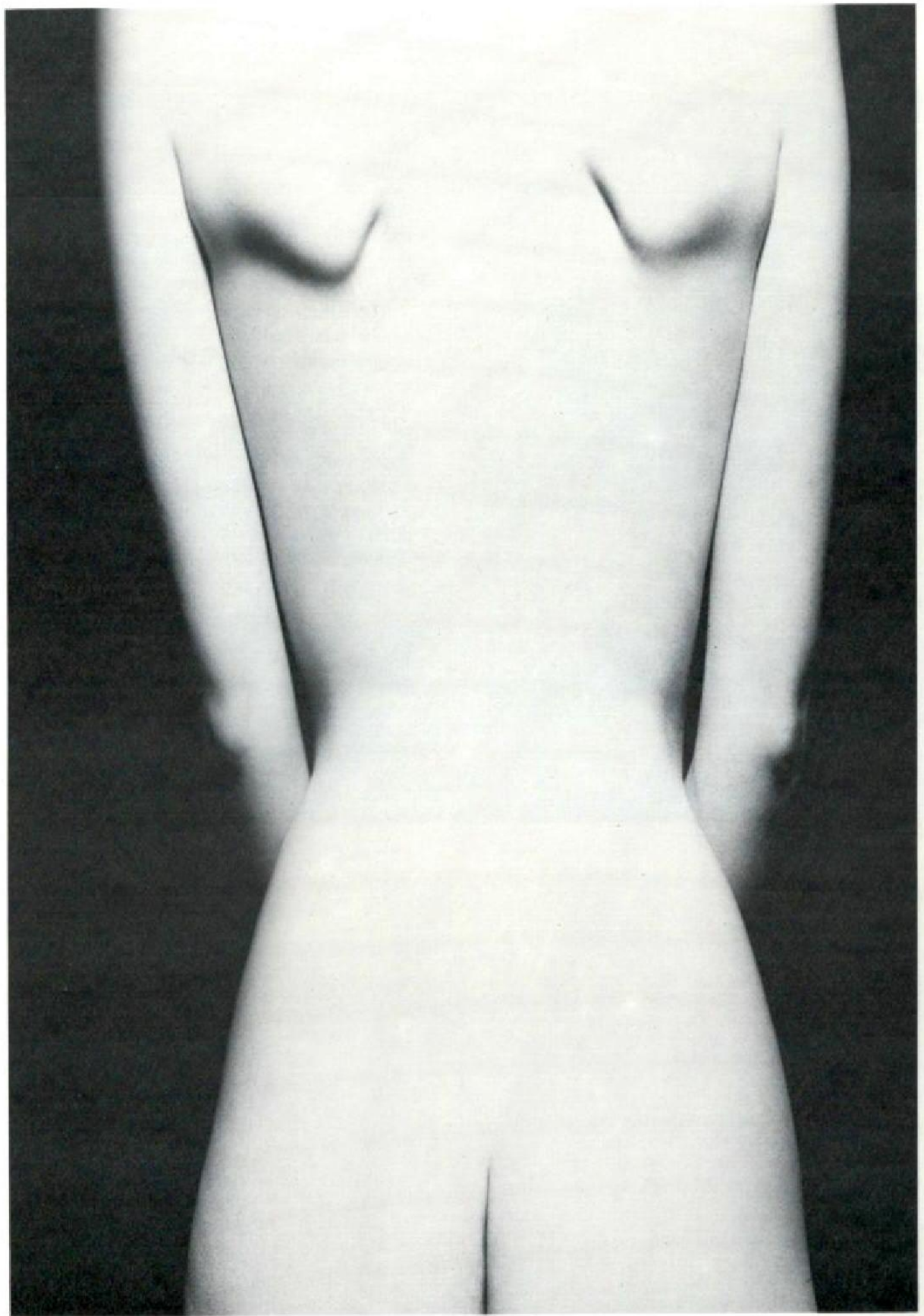


PLATE 51

Another straightforward picture, created by direct but diffused studio flash, diffusion of the image, and delicate printing.

The flash unit, diffused by a white brolly, was positioned in front of the model, slightly to one side and some way above her. Fill-in for the shadows was provided by a cardboard reflector positioned just below the model's arms, which were resting on a small table.

A red (25A) filter was used to lighten the skin tones, and was combined with extra film development by about 20%. A skylight filter was also used, smeared with soft margarine, to provide the diffusion of the image. The use of Ilford Multigrade printing paper makes it possible to select the precise contrast grade for the desired result.

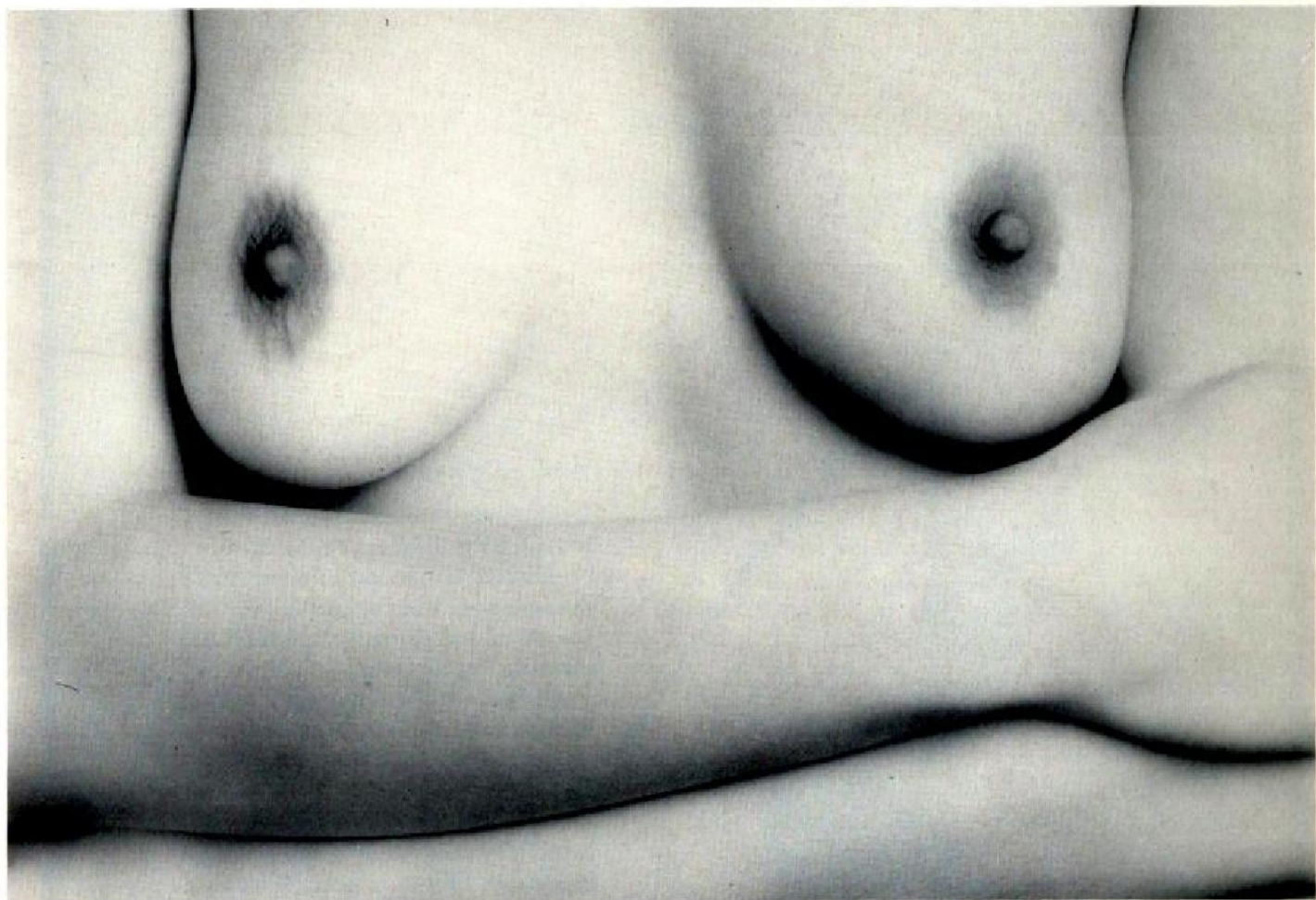


PLATE 52

'Nude – Defocused'

Deliberately defocusing a nude image, provided the lighting is correct, produces a strange sort of wasting or dissolving effect. I find this most attractive, and particularly suitable to the nude female form.

A plain white continuous background, made from a roll of background paper, is lit very brightly – I used tungsten light since I was after a grainy result. The low output of this lighting enabled me to uprate and push process the film to achieve this effect. A separate light is used for the model, and had to be less intense than the background lighting. The exposure-meter readings were taken from the subject's skin tones to assure that they would record as a mid-grey value, the much brighter white background eating into the subject image when defocused.

The lens aperture used is unimportant, but it is necessary to carry out the act of defocusing at the same aperture as that at which the exposure is made. (Pentax 6 × 7, 90mm/f2.8 lens, 1/250th second at f4, Ilford HP5 rated at EI 1600 developed ID-11)

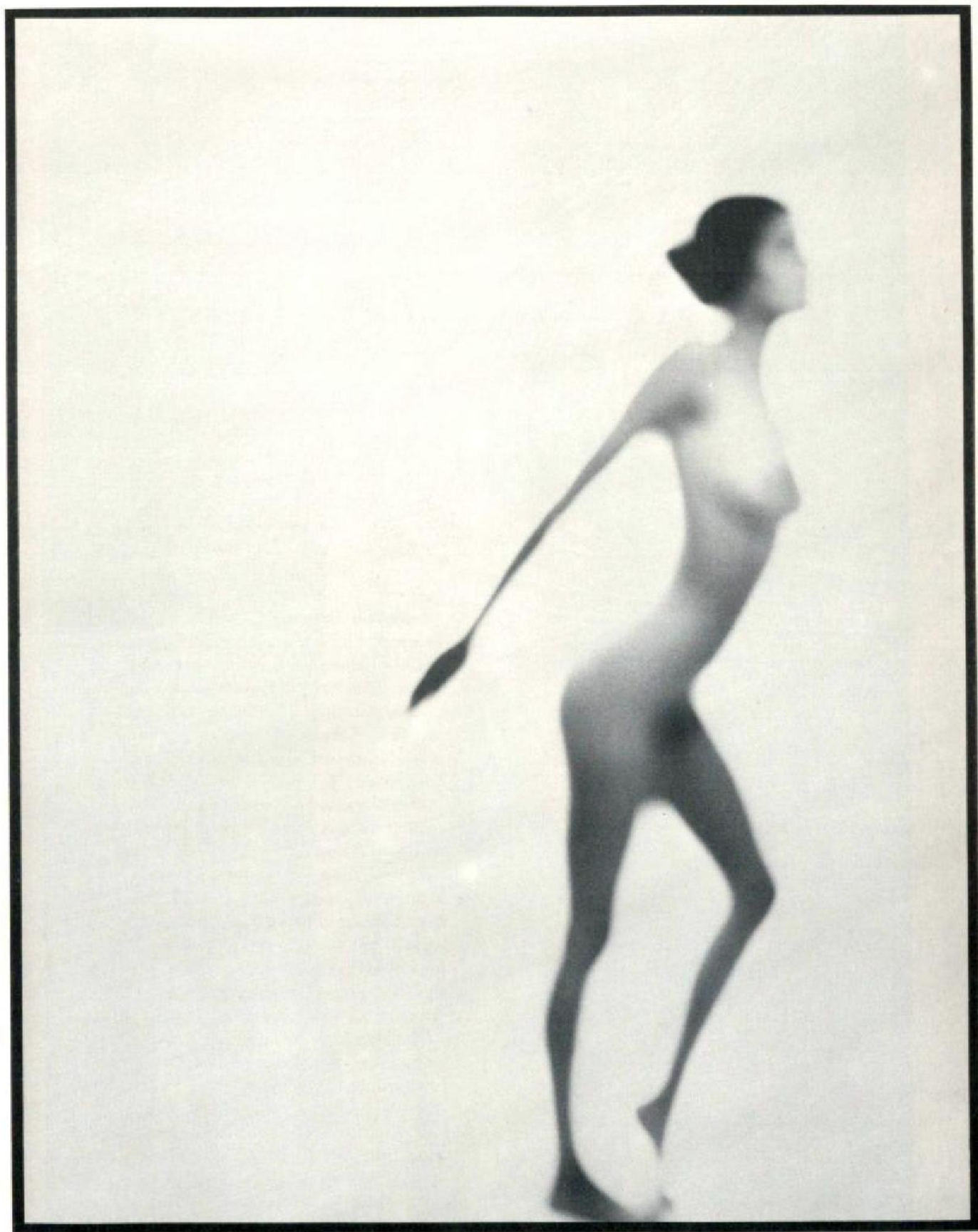


PLATE 53

Sometimes the simplest of props can be most effective in enhancing the mood or character of a picture, as in *Anamorphic Nude Portrait*.

Taken in the studio, the background was lit by a flash unit fitted with a black honeycomb attachment. This background light was set to half-power for a fairly subdued effect. The main light was a more powerful unit directed through a white umbrella onto the model from a position just in front and somewhat to one side of her. A white cardboard reflector was secured to a spare lighting stand and positioned to the other side of the model, filling-in the darker shadow areas.

Angela's long hair was greased and combed back to simplify and enhance her facial features. The use of an anamorphic or 'squeeze' lens has stretched the figure, enhancing the surrealistic quality of this photograph.

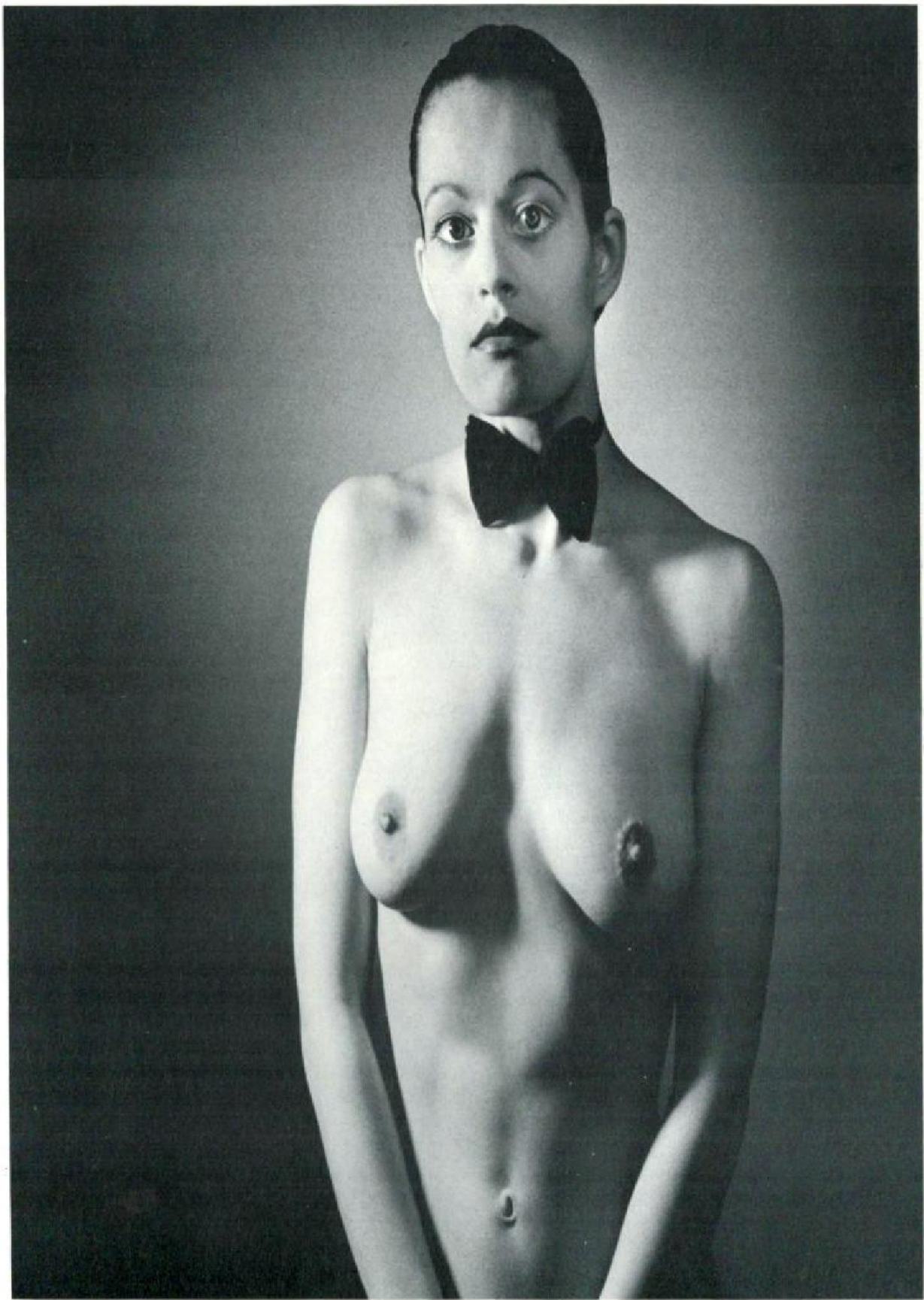




PLATE 54

An available light study, taken in the dark interior of an old uninhabited cottage. The sole source of illumination was daylight from a window above and behind the model.

Instead of trying to control the lighting contrast, I have allowed it to dictate the style. It was necessary to uprate the film speed to EI 1250, developing it in Paterson Acuspeed developer.

PLATES 55 (left) & 56 (right)
'Naked - I & II'

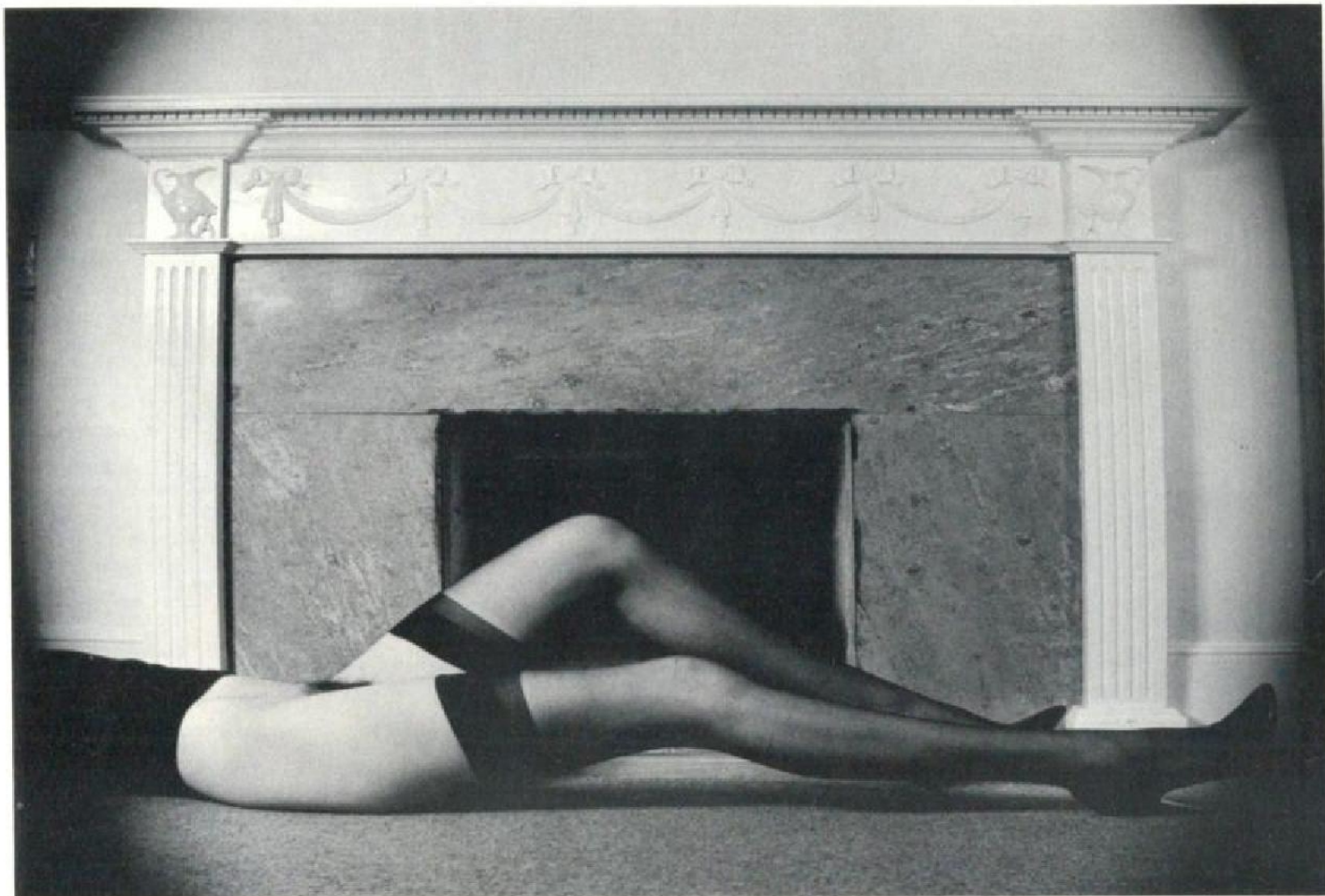
I rarely photograph the body completely naked. A female nude, particularly when standing, seems to lose her poise when not wearing shoes. Besides poise, high-heeled shoes tend to enhance the muscular tension within a model's body. Without them, a woman may appear too naked. However, this very fact can be used constructively in some types of picture, helping to enhance the sense of nakedness or vulnerability. In *Naked - I & II*, the use of an anamorphic lens to 'squeeze' and stretch the figure reinforces this impression still further.

Studio flash was used for both pictures, and a red filter has been utilised to lighten the skin tones – making the subject appear quite stark against the black background.









PLATES 57 (1st picture) &
58 (2nd picture)

In both images of *The Fireplace*, the shape and form of the model is identical, even though in one picture the fireplace is tall and upright, while in the other it is flat and squat.

For the first picture, my anamorphic lens was used vertically, to squeeze both the model and the fireplace into a slim upright shape. In the second picture, the lens was rotated in its mount to provide horizontal stretching, or vertical compression. Of course, with the model also on a horizontal plane, her dimensions remain unaltered from the first image. Both pictures were taken with portable electronic flash units.

PLATE 59

Almost like a human sculpture, *Study* has been lit to produce a highly abstract examination of curves and lines, with sufficient detail to prevent it from becoming too abstract.

It is lit by two studio flash units, both used direct but diffused through white umbrellas, to provide an even – almost flat – lighting quality. A red filter and some degree of overdevelopment to the film have maintained very light tonal rendering of the model's skin.





PLATE 60

When taking a nude portrait I insist that the model is completely naked. It is vital that she actually feels naked. If she is pretending, you can read it in her face.

Three studio flash lights were used for this picture. One, fitted with a honeycomb attachment, was directed onto a canvas background. A main light, used with a diffusion brolly, was directed onto the model slightly from one side. And the third, as a fill-in, was set to half-power and directed towards the shadow side of the subject for diffusion.

PLATES 61 (left) &
62 (right)
'Intrusion'

To create a natural atmosphere for these pictures, I used normal available domestic room lighting. The film was uprated and push processed, both for a grainy effect and to obtain an acceptable exposure. Even so, it was still necessary to use a tripod.

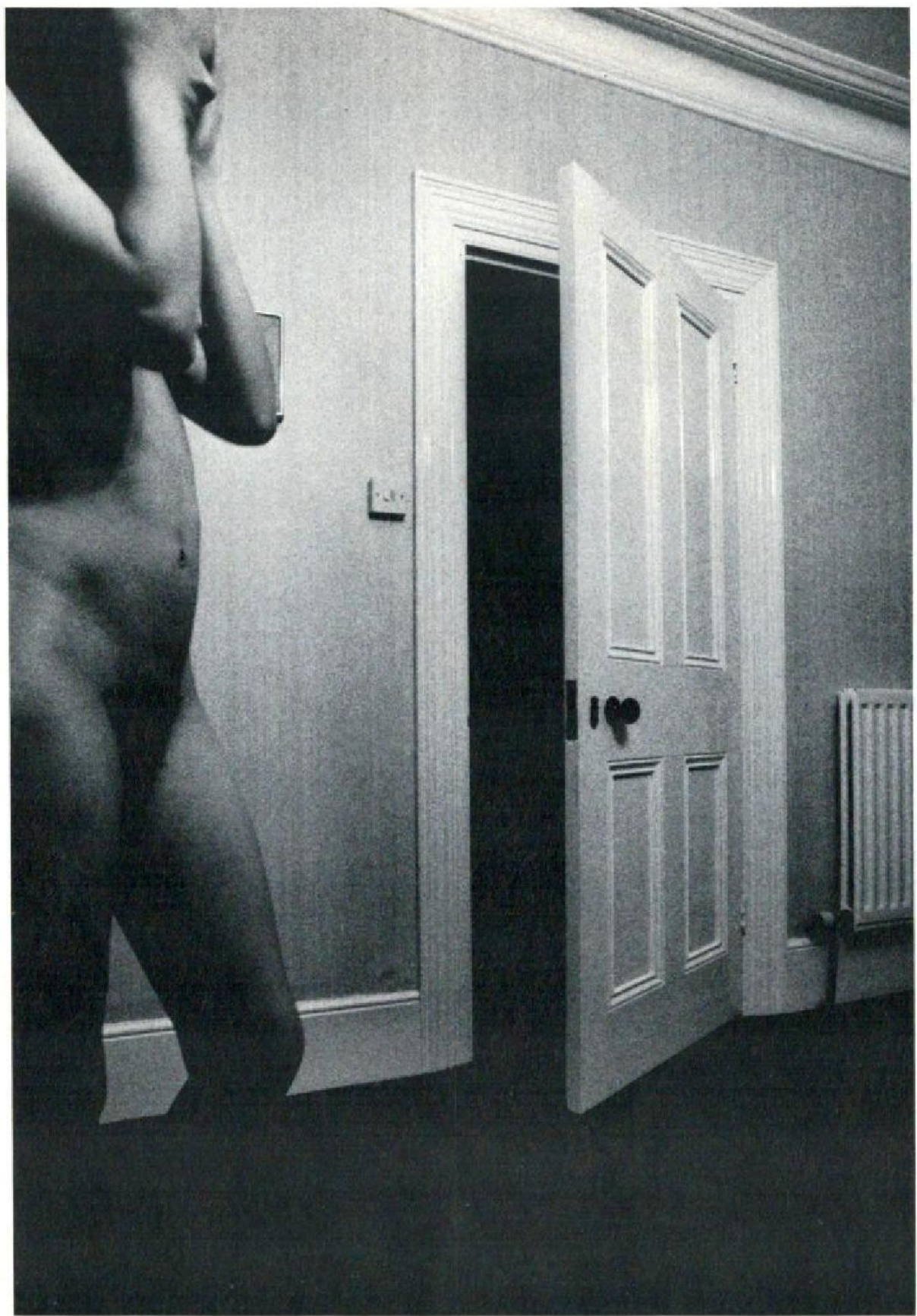




PLATE 63

Nude Drying Her Hair, was taken by tungsten lighting, enabling a relatively long exposure to be made (1/4 second) to record the blurred movement of the model.

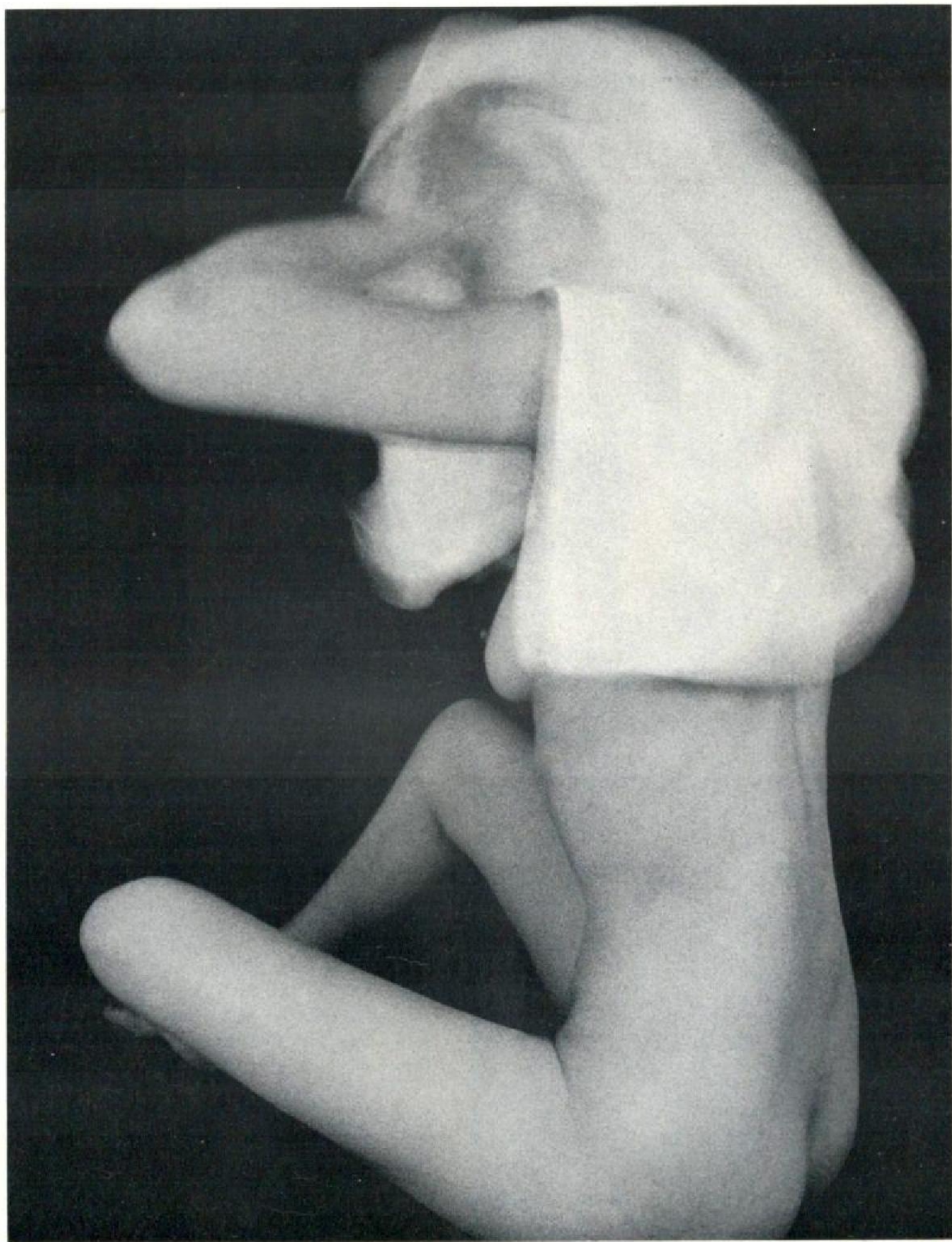
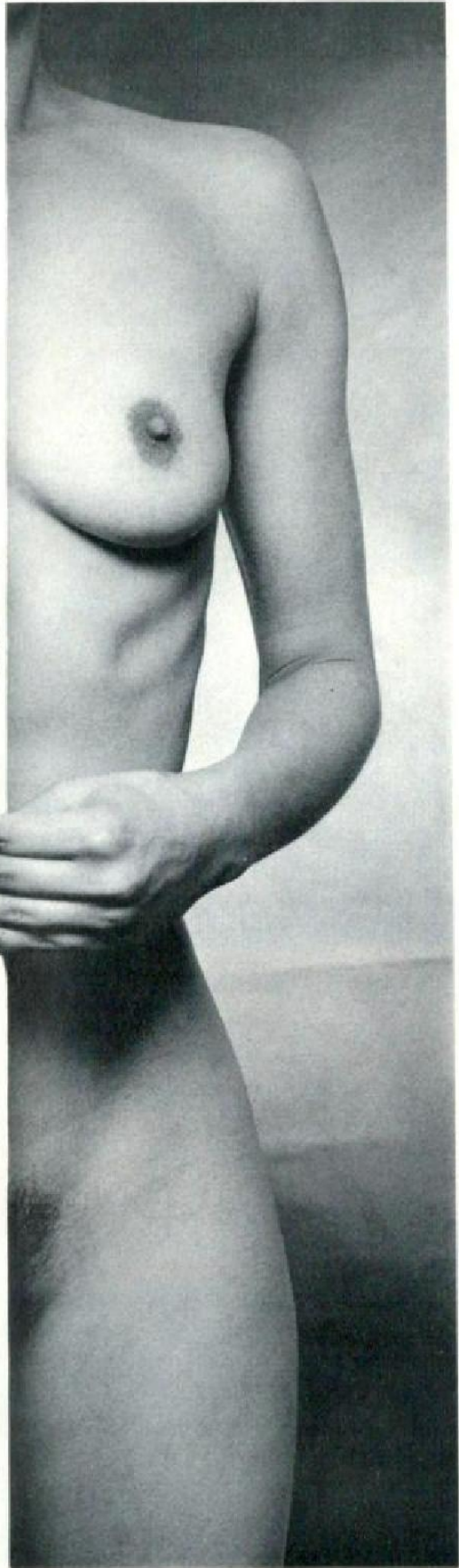


PLATE 64

Division – I (the first of a pair) is an experiment with pictures designed specifically for the white page of a book.

A narrow white board, which Angela is holding, divides the picture vertically in two. Only her fingers link the two halves. The board was painted brilliant white, specially for this picture, and any slight tones which recorded in the final print were removed by bleaching.

The subject has been lit directly from the front, by diffused electronic flash. Two smaller flash units were directed onto the background.



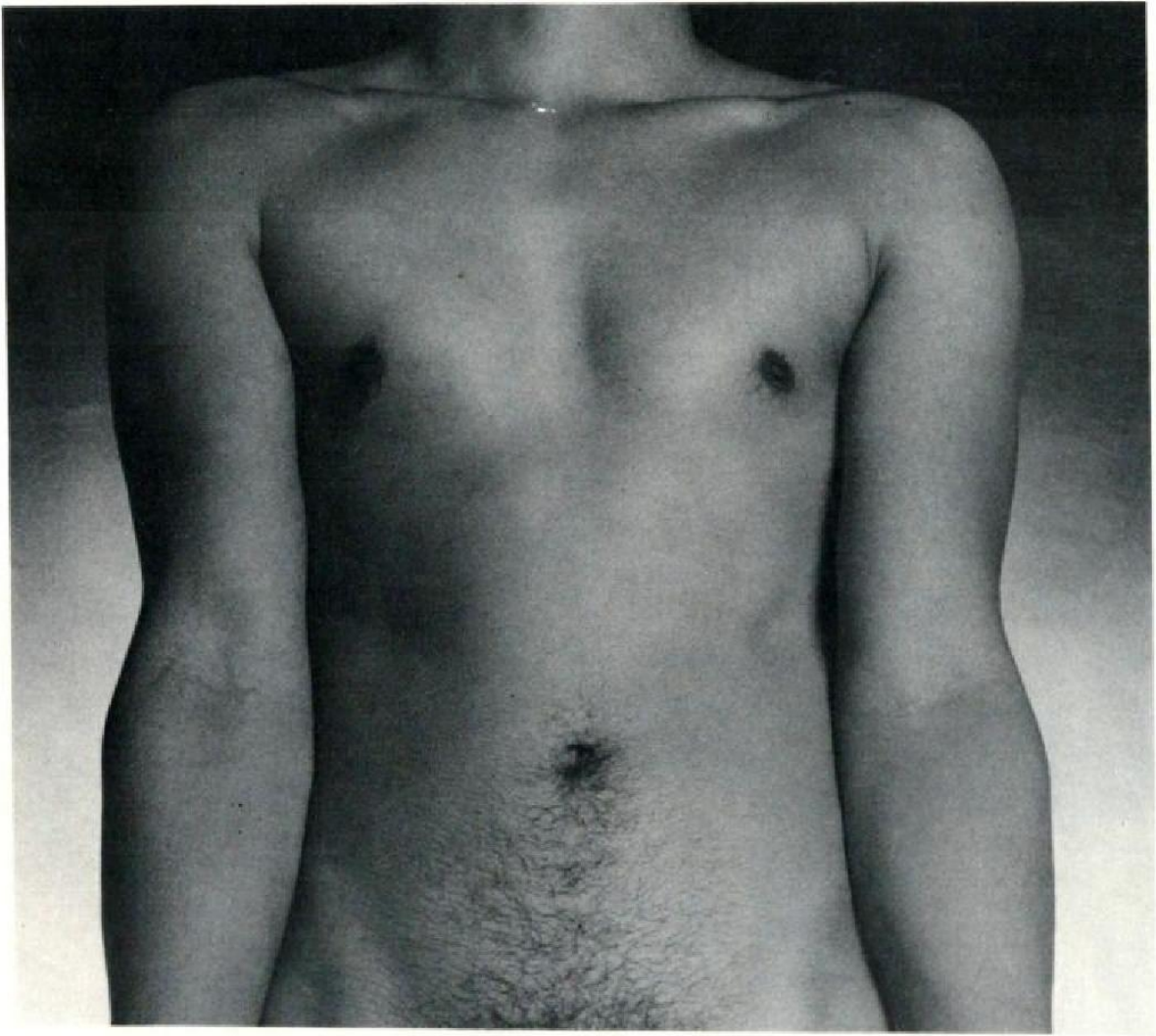


PLATE 65

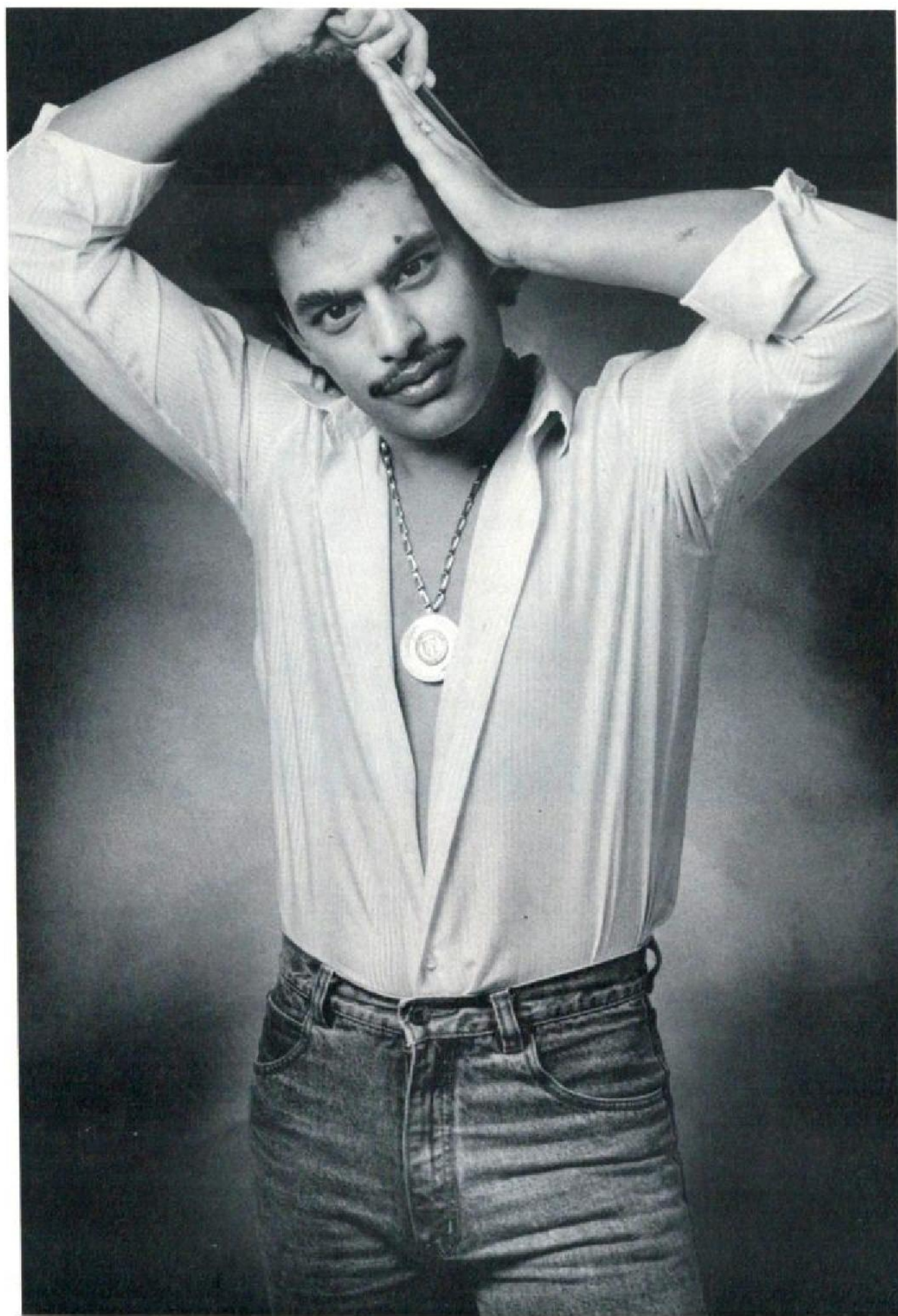
Division – II (the second of the pair) takes the 'divisions' theme still further with a transition from female to male nude. The genitals in each picture are obscured by the blank white area of the boards, so removing the most basic fundamental difference or 'division' between the sexes.

This picture was lit in almost identical fashion to the previous one.

PLATES 66 (left) &
67 (right)
'The Poser'

Working on pairs of pictures, as opposed to a single image, enables one to develop an idea and/or express a point of view.

The background for *The Poser* was lit by a studio flash unit, fitted with a honeycomb attachment. The flash was set to half-power for a more subdued lighting effect. The main light was direct but diffused flash and fill-in was provided by a reflector.



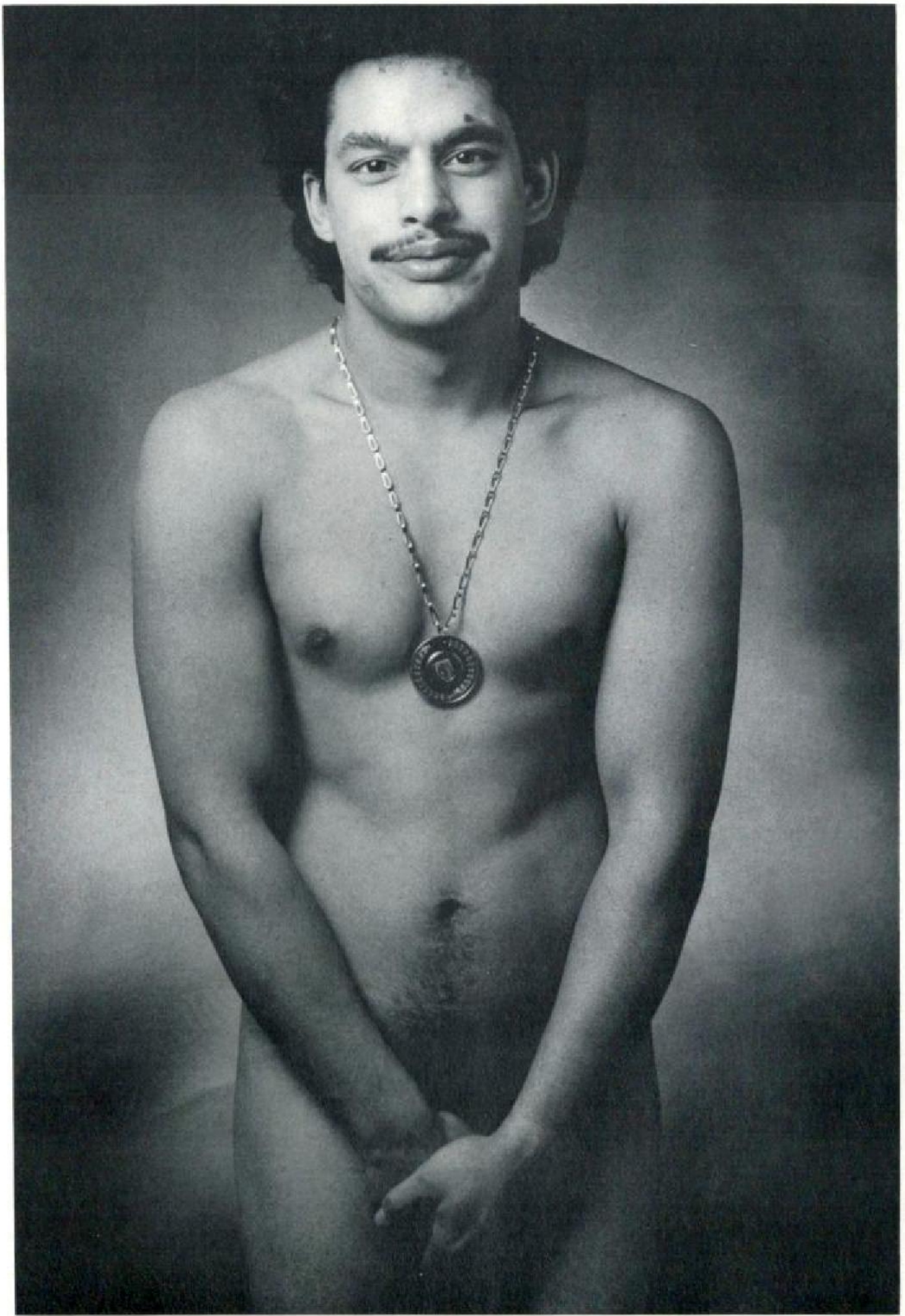


PLATE 68

Anti-Man, or the anonymous British male! I don't really think too much of the photography of young muscular males. Few males, particularly older ones, bear any resemblance to that image, just as few women bear any resemblance to the 'hour-glass' image used in advertising.

Two studio flash units were directed onto the background, while a third unit, diffused through a brolly, was used to light the subject. A white cardboard reflector, secured to a spare lighting stand, provided the fill-in for the shadows.



CONCLUSION

In retrospect and, especially through the work necessitated by creating this book, photographing the nude has been an edifying experience; not only have I learned more about the subject itself, I have also learned a great deal about photography, about myself and the pictorial way in which my mind works.

In many respects, this has totally changed my life. In others, it has reinforced even more strongly some of the views and attitudes which I already possessed. Certainly, life has become more enjoyable and worthwhile in that I now have a more positive sense of direction.

The book has also been directly instrumental in improving my own photography. It has enabled me to develop a constructive and progressive approach to each subject tackled. Eventually, I am sure, it will also result in a far greater understanding and appreciation of virtually everything around me.

If there is one single factor which I would consider

to have been most influential in my own development as a photographer of the nude, I would say categorically that it is working almost exclusively with just one model. This has enabled me to develop ideas on and my own attitude towards the subject, progressively and naturally. Although a change of model requires a change of attitude and approach, which can be refreshing, too many breaks hinder any natural progress.

Continuity, particularly of one's creative or artistic ability is, I am sure, paramount in a photographer's development. Perhaps once such development is complete it would be easier to work with other models. However, I do not yet know if this is so. I am still very much a novice, and still learning. I also believe that this development really never ends. It is, I am sure, a continuous process without end, never enabling one finally to announce that I am an 'expert' at nude photography. This is a subject which perhaps once I

believed to be limited in some respects, but has now opened out with infinite potential, and which can never be fully explored.

In addition, working almost entirely with one model has enabled me to develop the subject with great satisfaction, within my own obvious limitations. It has provided a vast amount of pleasure and enjoyment, and an opportunity to explore myself more fully. It has also broadened and developed my relationship with my model, Angela, both in an artistic sense and, perhaps even more importantly, in a personal sense. Our life together has become much more 'full' and meaningful. Although our lives do perhaps tend to revolve around the pictures which we produce, this in itself gives us a marvellous sense of sharing and being 'as one'. The most important element in photographing the nude is surely the subject – the model. A model who can share with the photographer an interest and enthusiasm for the work is by far the most valuable asset which he can have. It is for these reasons, that I leave the last words in this book to my model – Angela.

ANGELA REBECCA FERNANDEZ

When I first met David, I was already aware that he had an interest in photographing the nude. He has never been very keen to use professional models, although he has worked with glamour models previously and does not find them very satisfactory for nude work. Moreover David does not believe that you should have to pay for something which should really be done for pleasure.

Before I met David I had some ambitions, perhaps, of becoming a photographic model. Although I am not sure now if there really is such a person within me. In fact, I am not sure precisely 'what' I would consider myself to be within David's photography. I used to think of a model as being two things. First, there is the artist's model, who is posed in a way which is totally under the control of the artist. She usually has little opportunity to contribute anything to the final picture herself. Then there is the modern image of the 'glamour' model, who runs through her repertoire of

poses while the photographer takes endless photographs, usually with a motordrive attached to his camera. At the end of the session, the photographer may have 'captured' a momentary part of her repertoire, but little else. I would like to be neither of these models. In fact, I don't see myself as a 'model' at all now, just someone who shares an interest in photography of the nude.

Quite honestly, I did not find David's previous work with other models very inspired at all. In fact, much of it was quite boring. Even the first photographs which we made together were nothing very special. Just the odd one or two were what I would now consider 'good' pictures, and these were few and far between.

As our relationship developed, both personally and artistically, the number of successful pictures which David produced seemed gradually to increase. With the deepening of our relationship, I too was becoming much more interested in the work and, eventually, in producing pictures for myself. Not nudes, however. Just photographs generally. David bought me a camera of my own and I started taking photographs.

At first, these were almost entirely of our young son, Jay, but gradually I started taking pictures of other things. I really enjoy taking photographs and, since I now have some experience of working on each side of the camera, I have developed a much greater understanding of David's work – particularly his nude work.

I am now much more able to contribute towards David's pictures myself. We share a terrific enthusiasm when working together and this, I am sure, has helped David's own artistic development. Whereas in those early days he was producing only the occasional 'good' picture, he is now able to do so almost every time. Mind you, he does still have to work very hard to get the results he wants.

My own photography has been quite heavily influenced by both David's work and our working together. I have never set out to copy David's style in my own photographs. It is more a subconscious influence. But it is there nevertheless. I am pleased by this, for it shows that our artistic and aesthetic taste is developing along similar lines. This is invaluable

when working together on nude pictures. We each understand how the other thinks, and I can appreciate more what David is trying to achieve.

I know now just how important it is for the model to be artistically involved in the photographer's work. I see the vast amount of work and effort which David puts into each of his pictures and realise that it would be almost impossible if I was not willing to put an equal amount of effort into it myself.

Strangely, I have never liked having my photograph taken. I still don't now. The very first photographs which David took of me felt at the time as if I was merely in front of a camera having my photograph taken. Now it is completely different. When working on nude photographs with David, I never do feel that I am having a photograph taken. Instead, I feel that we are between us making a picture. Interestingly, it does not feel the same when I work with other photographers. The problem is that many who set out to photograph the nude don't really know what they want to achieve. If the photographer doesn't know, how can the model be expected to? Experiences such as these leave me with that same feeling of merely having my photograph taken.

As a woman, I might once have believed that an interest in the nude, particularly the female nude, was confined to men. However, through David's nude pictures and through my own involvement in working on them, I have developed an appreciation of the nude female form. Not just that of the younger, slimmer figure but nudes of all shapes, sizes and ages. It seems to me that there is indeed true beauty in the nude form of all women. It merely requires exploiting differently.

When I look at the many nude pictures which we have produced, I never see them being of me. They are simply pictures of the nude female, exciting or interesting in their own right. However, the work of other photographers, no matter how good, does not have quite the same effect on me. The fact that we made the picture between us adds to my enjoyment. I consider myself lucky to have been able to work with someone who has brought me so much personal satisfaction. Anyone who can photograph the nude and make it into art is a lucky person. Anyone who can contribute to that art is equally fortunate.

Angela R. Fernandez

Picture credits

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